How to Achieve Incredible Results BY Inspiration

P. VATSALA
T. GOKULAN

Edited by
SWAMI NISHCHALANANDA
VANITHA K. BHAT ◆ S. RAMARATNAM

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New Age Books

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all our grandchildren, in all the countries, whom we see as our balagurus/young teachers/young torch-bearers who teach us about 'pure heart,' 'the sacred heart' (including abhayshankar, vivekanand, anjali and pooja).

> *"Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."*
>
> —Jesus Christ

FOREWORD

It is with pleasure that I have been asked to write a foreword to this book. It is full of inspiring anecdotes which show us, from the personal experience of numerous people mentioned, that there is more to life than we think. We, as individuals, may think that we are in charge of our life, but on a deeper level there is a greater Intelligence which guides and rules the fate of all of us.

Really important things in our life come from this deeper level. Faced with impossible decisions and situations, our mind seizes up with despair. It is in this kind of crisis that we turn to God for help. Often it arrives in the most unexpected way – like a thunderbolt. This book is the story of people who have had this kind of experiences.

May this book inspire all who read it. May it bring humility and openness to all of us. May it help to put us in touch with the deeper Reality which underlies every being and everything.

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We admire the magnanimity of Mr. Ananthu Bhat, Founder President and Mrs. Vanitha Bhat, Principal of Balalok Higher Secondary School for having launched Value Oriented Education and in the process, developing not only their school children but also educating and developing their parents as well. They have given us the same opportunity and also the privilege of teaching Yoga Science in their school for the past 8 years. Besides, Sister Rosely Paul, Principal of Holy Angels Higher Secondary School and Mrs. Mythili Soman, Principal of Kola Saraswathi Vaishnava Higher Secondary School, also gave us the opportunity to teach Yoga to students and interact with them. We taught Yoga to students of Madras Christian College also in their campus.

The occasion has opened our eyes to the new vistas – the pure mind and divinity of children. They became our Balagurus/young teachers. We have the blessings of Swami Raghavendra, Swami Nischalananda and Swami Satchidananda. Swami Nischalananda, Mrs. Vanitha Bhat and Dr S. Ramaratnam edited the book. We are highly indebted to them for giving us courage and inspiration. We are also indebted to Sri R. Ganesan and Sri B.S. Raju for their illustrative cartoons. Mr. M. Vijayan, Chartered Accountant, Vijaya Shanti Towers, Vadapalani, Chennai extended his computer typing facilities and Smt. P. Jaya Radha typed all the matters for this book.

Finally, we are indebted to Motilal Banarsidass Publishers (P) Ltd. for their valuable suggestions and their new organization New Age Books for the publication of this book.

With sincere thanks, we acknowledge all their help to us and wish everyone from child to grown-up, 'incredible achievements in this new era!'

VATSALA and GOKULAN

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INTRODUCTION

Our darling grand children, and their beloved parents,

We have heard:
"Obedience is love" – MOTHER MARY
"He who obeys, will command." – SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
"Surrender your ego and obey Me; I will give you My Grace and protection for ever." – LORD KRISHNA

We all are quality-conscious. We are excellent and positive when we obey our conscience. We want quality food, pollution free air, clean water, garbage-free roads and streets, law-abiding and safety-conscious vehicle drivers. In short, our cities and towns should be like Singapore. Of course, we want the whole country to be like Japan, Europe, or U.S. with beautiful gardens, natural parks, plenty of trees etc. – a heaven on earth.

Why is our wish not materialized? Why are we lagging behind the advanced countries?

"Disobedience, disobedience, everywhere. No discipline any where." This is our problem (except in our armed forces and ashrams).

Let us look at a common scene:

Due to low marks in his examination, a student was unhappy. On his way home, he tore away all his answer-papers into tiny bits and threw them in the bus stop where he had to wait for his bus. The breeze spread them all over the place. An elderly gentleman seeing his wild action advised him:

"My boy, if you were in Singapore, you would have to pay a heavy fine. Why not pick up the pieces and put them into that garbage bin over there?"

The student did as he was told and picked up all the pieces of paper.

His first action was disobedience due to emotions which blinded him to his conscience. Later, he obeyed his conscience which was

pricked by the elderly person. Moreover, we cannot blame him alone because he has seen other people doing the same thing– throwing away garbage from their houses and shops and the wind spreading them all over the places.

If all of us obey our conscience, which is reflected in law and order/rules and regulations, the result would be wonderful. But our mind, the doer, doesn't listen to the inner voice of conscience. So, as Mr. Seshan ex.- Chief Election Commissioner says, "Our *nagaram* is now *narakam* (our cities and towns are a hell)."

Similar to environmental pollution, our mental world (*chitakash*) is also being polluted by negative emotions and thoughts such as anger, fear etc. These thoughts do us much harm by producing and secreting excessive bio-chemicals in the body system that we become mentally and physically sick. Most of our ailments are said to be psychosomatic – originating from the mind and percolating into the body.

So we need immediate cleansing of our own mind and we need to become positive in thought, word and deed.

The first chapter of this book deals with the nature and power of thoughts and how positive thoughts bring good results and negative thoughts bring bad and dangerous results.

'*Prajnanam Brahma*' (Aitareya Upanishad) means 'consciousness is *Brahman*/God'. We all have consciousness/divinity within. All the great Masters have been reminding us of this. *Svadharma*, the righteous individual actions, are elaborated and codified by the Masters. To remind us to follow the right path, temples, churches, mosques etc. have been built. Thus the right path is also called the divine path or *dharma*. By surrendering our ego and obeying the divinity/God we are impelled to think positively and do righteous actions. From negative attitudes we will shift to positive attitudes and action. In other words, we will give up temptations and shortcuts and move on to good actions in life such as loving all and serving them with our limited means. In this way, we will enjoy eternal happiness. Reduction of selfishness and self-centredness leads to *moksha* - the real freedom/spiritual freedom.

All the anecdotes given in this book (ch. 2 to 10) are real experiences of many ordinary people including the authors. They are pointers towards permanent joy in life. Peace, health, happiness and prosperity (material and spiritual) are everyone's objective. All the ten practices and the related sayings of the great masters

presented in this book, take us towards the same goal. Start with any practice that you like and the goal will be reached. The anecdotes support the Truth that our Masters have been telling us and they are intended to re-inforce our faith in God and faith in ourselves.

Through obedience to mother, father and Guru, our concentration power and right decision making ability will improve and we will achieve great things in life. The Masters (Gurus) are our own pure-consciousness in different forms. When there is conflicting views, the Guru should be the right decision–maker.

The last chapter (ch. 12) deals with the glory of Guru and his grace and how one gets it. Very few people realize that the Guru is the embodiment of God. A *Sadguru*, who has realized God, is in a position to give us immediate solution to our problems as and when they are presented to him. We are in a position to see Him and to hear Him talk to us. Our usual practice is to go to temples and ask God to solve all our problems. This is good; but the Guru can be contacted through telephone/letter or one can meet him in person any time. This is an additional advantage.

Finally, we hope that the readers will find this book both enjoyable and profitable. May the faith and inspiration guide you to achieve your aspirations in this new millennium.

VATSALA and GOKULAN

PART I

SELF-DEVELOPMENT

SONG OF EIGHTEEN VALUES

Serenity, regularity, absence of vanity
Sincerity, Simplicity, veracity
Equanimity, fixity, non-irritability
Adaptability, humility, tenacity
Integrity, nobility, magnanimity
Charity, generosity, purity
Practise daily these eighteen "ities"
You will soon attain immortality
Brahman is the only real entity
Mr. So and So is a false nonentity
You will abide in Eternity and Infinity
You will behold unity in diversity
You cannot attain "ities" in the university

— SWAMI SIVANANDA SARASWATHY

Self-development is the key for all developments

To love all is to love God
To serve all is to worship God

— SWAMI RAMDAS

"How can you love God whom you do not see, if you do not love your neighbour whom you can see, whom you can touch, with whom you live?"

— MOTHER TERASA

"My dream is to wipe every tear
from every eye."

— MAHATMA GAṆDHI

CHAPTER I

ALL THOUGHTS TRAVEL TO THE DESTINATION

"Whether a person is aware of it or not, he is constantly transmitting and receiving thoughts. This is why people have experiences of ESP from time to time....

The ability to communicate and perceive thoughts is developed to a higher degree in those who are said to be psychic or to have great intuitive abilities.

Every thought has weight, shape, size, form, colour, quality and power. An experienced meditator can see all these aspects directly with his inner eye. For example, a spiritual thought has a yellow colour, while a thought charged with anger and hatred is dark red...."

— SWAMI VISHNUDEVANAND
(in his book 'Meditation and Mantras', page 4, para 2)

How thoughts travel

It was a severe cold winter day of December 1959, in Manchester. We were warming up and watching a live TV programme relayed from London. The short programme made us think and wonder about the infinite capability of thought and its power. It gives a key to unlock many of the riddles of life.

Scene 1. A psychologist appears on the stage of a London theatre and performs many wonderful feats. Among others, he shows how thoughts travel from mind to mind, like a telephone-call from A to B.

Scene 2. Far away from the theatre, is the Central Library. The Chief Justice of London High Court walks in. He takes out a book from one of the many shelves. He is not looking for a particular book but taking a random sample. He opens the book, and reads a paragraph. The reading is done silently.

Scene 3. We come back to the psychologist in the London theatre. He starts writing on a black-board, the exact words that the Judge is silently reading. After the reading is over, the judge

reads out loudly the same paragraph again, over a telephone which is made audible to all the spectators. The reading of the judge and the writing of the psychologist tallied very closely, though they were in different places, far apart from each other.

What is the inference?

Is it not that all thoughts travel and a trained telepathic mind can receive the message?

Another notable incident

We were praying in India for a person in USA everyday. The prayer was in secret and it was intended for his well-being and happiness. We didn't tell him about it. We knew that he required our encouragement and good wishes as he was in an unfavourable situation.

One day, over the phone he told us that he was waking up every morning with a pleasant feeling and inspiration. He was not able to exactly describe it; but he asked us what magic we were doing for him. He knew intuitively that we were praying for him though we did it in secret.

There is no magic in a simple prayer; but it was working as magic/miracle.

We asked him what time was he waking up and found it corresponded exactly with our prayer time.

Repeated dreams

A dream experience also shows this telepathic effect. In a dream I saw our old friend Thomas, searching for me in a big crowd. He came close to me but he passed-by and missed me. Thomas and myself had no contacts with each other over last 25 years. In the dream I could recognise Thomas; but he could not recognise me.

Exactly the same dream repeated itself surprisingly the next day. On the third morning, to our surprise, Thomas appeared at our door-step!

I almost shouted, "Thomas, I have been seeing you in my dreams over last two nights."

That is how I welcomed him.

The poor fellow didn't know my address and had been searching for me for the past three days. He was looking for someone who knew me and my where abouts. Finally he succeeded.

Just as many have experienced, though rarely, dream being repeated twice or more, to the same person, in some experiences, dream was repeated to two or more persons at the same time.

What is the common source of a dream repeated to many persons? Does it prove that though persons are physically different as individuals there is yet a common stratum for all?

So thoughts including prayers, blessings and wishes travel not only as audio but as video waves in dreams. Repetition of a dream is very rare; but if it happens, it is a confirmation that the dream is going to materialize, or already materialized.

Thoughts travel not only when the mind is in wakeful state but they are formed, transmitted and received all the time by subconscious mind.

Negative thoughts

What happens to negative thoughts?
Here is an anecdote to show its function.

Anil's new house was leaking from the roof in the monsoon period. He was very angry with his building contractor about it. He telephoned the building contractor and blasted him. Finally, he cursed, "You should be burnt alive."
The result?
Immediately Anil got a burning sensation all over his body. He found that the skin of both his hands started to change colour, turning to black. He had to apply some ointment to reduce the pain.

Harmful thoughts can turn back, like the recoil of a gun, at the same person having those thoughts.

Therefore, two lessons can be learnt from all these experiences:

1. Have good wishes and positive thoughts as much as possible. These will materialise and do good to all.
2. Be careful of the harmful repercussion to negative thoughts. Do not curse, but bless everyone as much as possible.

We are telepathic

Annual meeting of the board of directors of a large corporation was scheduled to be held in New Delhi. Mr. Anandaram, Finance Director of the corporation was going to attend and present his important financial statements and proposals. He arrived at the

Madras Airport 35 minutes before the scheduled departure of the flight on the previous night. After getting down from the car, he went with his baggage and checked in. Just then, he recollected that he left behind his spectacles on the back seat of his car!

Now that the car is gone, he was in a fix. What to do? No human effort can get it back. He started sweating double the usual Madras sweating rate. He was so humiliated by his own carelessness or better say, lack of awareness, while getting down from the car.

He is one who cannot read one word without specs. "What a fool I am." He told himself several times and stood in the line for custom's check. Yet another two more persons to be checked, his driver came up running, with his spectacles.

"How did you notice it?" asked Anandaram in sheer joy.

"I drove out about 3 km. away from airport, when I heard your voice calling me from behind: 'Madhava, Madhava !" It was.very clear. So I switched on the roof-light and looked at the front mirror. There I saw your specs lying on the back seat."

Now, who was calling the driver by his name? How could he see the spectacles in the mirror? These are matters for you to ponder over.

We are telepathic. Knowingly or unknowingly, we receive and transmit thoughts without using our normal senses. How it happens and in what medium thoughts travel are still a mystery?

Much more mysterious is intuition. To illustrate this point an anecdote is presented below:

(According to Swami Ramdas intuition is born of a purified heart and an illumined intelligence.)

How intuition gives warning about things to happen?

This happened in a 3-star hotel in Rajamandry. Around 9.30 in the night, the hotel manager on duty, called a room-boy and whispered, "Be ready at 12; room No. 18. Only two ladies–their husbands and their car driver are in room 19".

One of the ladies, Vimala was an intuitive person and she got an inner voice, as if some one telling within herself, "Be careful at 12 o'clock." The two ladies were on a pilgrimage to Bhadrachalam with their husbands.

Vimala checked up the door and ensured that it was properly locked. The window near the door was having steel rods as

protection. Apart from these two, there was nothing else to check up. However, the inner voice kept on reminding almost every minute, "Be careful at 12 o'clock". She put off all lights except the one at the centre of the room. The hand bag containing costly jewellery which her friend was to offer to Lord Sri Rama at Bhadrachalam temple was the most precious thing that they had to take care of. Vimala gently kept the bag under the bed of her friend who was snoring. With these precautions taken, Vimala kept herself awake.

Exactly at 12 someone opened the window, removed the steel rods as if by magic and entered the room. Vimala was shocked and for a minute her voice was chocked. A second person was half-through the window when Vimala shouted very loudly "Oh! Get up, get up....".

In this unexpected situation the two intruders withdrew. The first one was the room-boy and the other was the hotel manager on night duty! Vimala could see their faces clearly. Who saved the two ladies by timely information? Obviously, the intuition. What is the source of intuition? The common sub-stratum . . . . THAT ONE COMMON SOURCE. Our great *rishis*/ masters called that as consciousness *(Brahman)*.

Thoughts with positive, negative and neutral (divine) Energies

Listening to Swami Chinmayananda's talk is learning and full of inspiration. Seeing Satya Sai Baba is ecstasy to all devotees. Matha Amritanandamayi's hug is supreme love – compassion – a thrill that brings tears of ecstasy. All these experiences happen due to divinity which works as positive charge to our mind. Their love and compassion cause these effects.

In the company of loving persons, one experiences abundant positive charges/energy.

On the other hand, dislike, anger, hatred, jealousy and other negative emotions produce negative charges/energy in the mental-body (*mano-maya-kosha*).

Certain politicians make exciting speeches that produce negative charges in the atmosphere. Like negative atomic particles, such negative suggestions travel and incite people to destructive thoughts and activities. This is also well-accepted.

Prayers, *Japa* (repetition of a holy name), *sankeerthan* (singing the glories of the Lord) etc can all create positive charges. The sound of a church bell and the call to pray in a mosque, all produce positive charges in the atmosphere.

Factory-noise, traffic-pollution and sounds from vehicles produce fatigue and sickness due to their negative influence on us.

These are external influences on the mind. Also having negative thoughts within oneself, can produce all sorts of diseases called psychosomatic disorders.

To counter the innumerable negative charges, due to either internal or external influences, one should always resort to positive thinking. 'The Power of positive-thinking' by Norman Vincent Peale is a wonderful book on this subject.

Simple *Nama-Japa* (as mentioned in this book) is a very effective method for all situations. The *japa* will penetrate into the subconscious mind and go on continuously day and night. After sometime the mind becomes peaceful and full of ecstasy; it remains always positive or neutral (non-reactive) according to intensity of prayer.

By a neutral mind, we mean a steady mind that does not oscillate between pairs of opposites such as *sukha* and *dukha* (pleasure and pain). In such a state the mind is always in peace, ecstasy and bliss (*ananda*) the highest joy that does not depend on any object. Unconditional and eternal is its nature. According to *Gita*, this is the state of a well-poised person *(sthitaprajna)*.

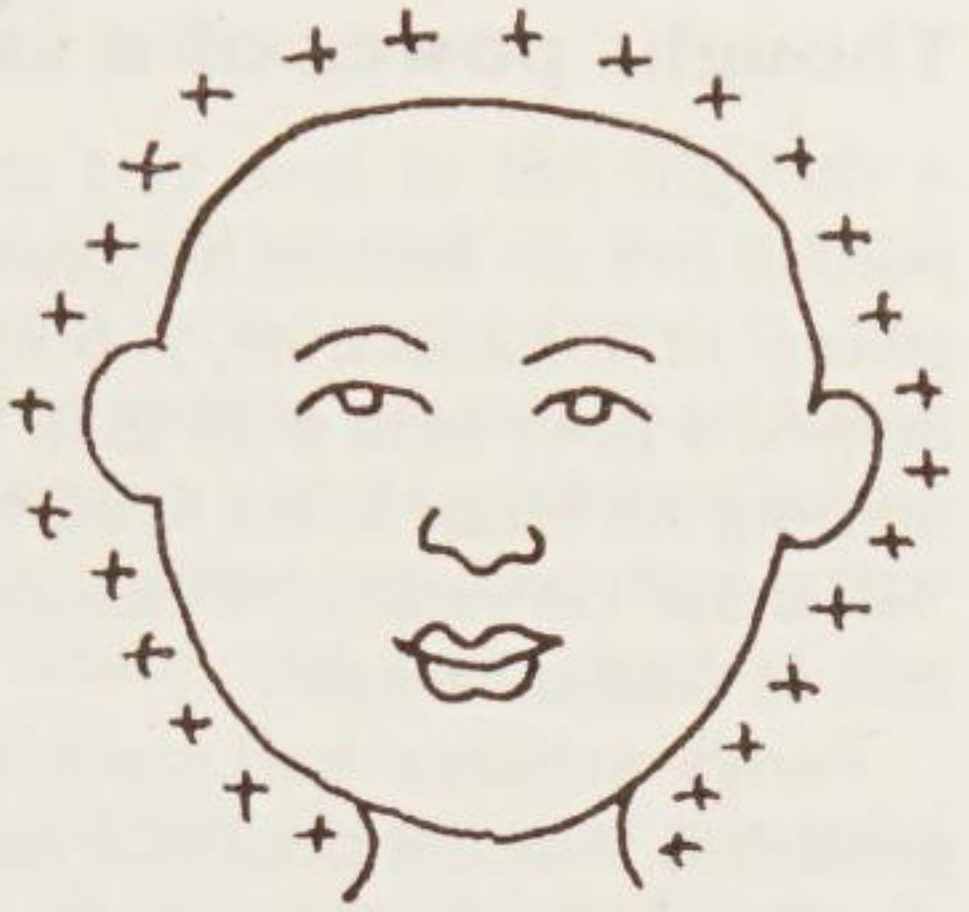
Experiences

Many have experienced this special joy during spiritual intensives; but only a few retain it. Regular *sadhana* or practice is necessary to maintain it.

In *pranic* healing, a positive person can cleanse the negativity of a sick person and charge him with health-giving positive-energy, which is received from the cosmos.

During 'Prayer, *Namajapa and Bhajan*', the process of cleansing and energising takes place. Negativity disappears; physical, mental and spiritual health is restored.

NEGATIVE
THOUGHT
(DEPRESSION)



POSITIVE
THOUGHT
(HAPPINESS)

NEUTRAL
THOUGHT
(EVER-BLISSFULNESS)

Thought power of a saint

A thought full of love and compassion is spiritual. A spiritual person has no desires for possession; rather he is very much on giving. In this anecdote, you will find how Kanchi Periya Acharya helped a poor man with gold when the saint actually possessed nothing for himself. He lived with frugal things, performed like a 'Maharaja' on various occasions by giving and people worshipped him as God-incarnate.

Periya Acharya[1] had many incidents in life which indicate his greatness. Once a poor old man went to him and told about his daughter's forthcoming marriage. He requested Swamiji to help him by giving ten sovereigns of gold to make ornaments for his daughter who didn't possess any jewellery. Swamiji understood the need and feelings of that poor unknown man and asked him to come back to him the following week.

Swamiji was a renunciate; whatever people gave him as *dakshina*/devotional offering to the Guru, he gave away to the needy or to the mutt.

Within the next few days, among the many visitors who came for Swamiji's *darshan*, there was a jeweller who gave exactly ten sovereigns as *dakshina (offering)*. Swamiji remembered the poor man and reserved the sovereigns for him. He happily gave the gift along with his blessings to the poor man

"Long live Maharaj; long live *mahaprabho* (great lord)!" exclaimed the old man with tears of joy,prostrating before Swamiji.

Maybe to fulfill the devotees' wishes, Swamiji lived just over 100 years and served them all till the last moment of his life.

Difference between a passing thought and deep rooted thought/desire

Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada, prime disciple of Sri Kalki Bhagavan explains the difference as follows:

Our mind can be divided into four

.. Unconscious mind (as in deep sleep) Stage - 1
.. Conscious Mind (as in wakeful state) Stage - 2
.. Sub-conscious mind (as in dream) Stage - 3

---

1. Periya Acharya is His Holiness Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi, of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam.

.. Super Conscious mind (as in deep prayer, meditation/*samadhi*) Stage - 4

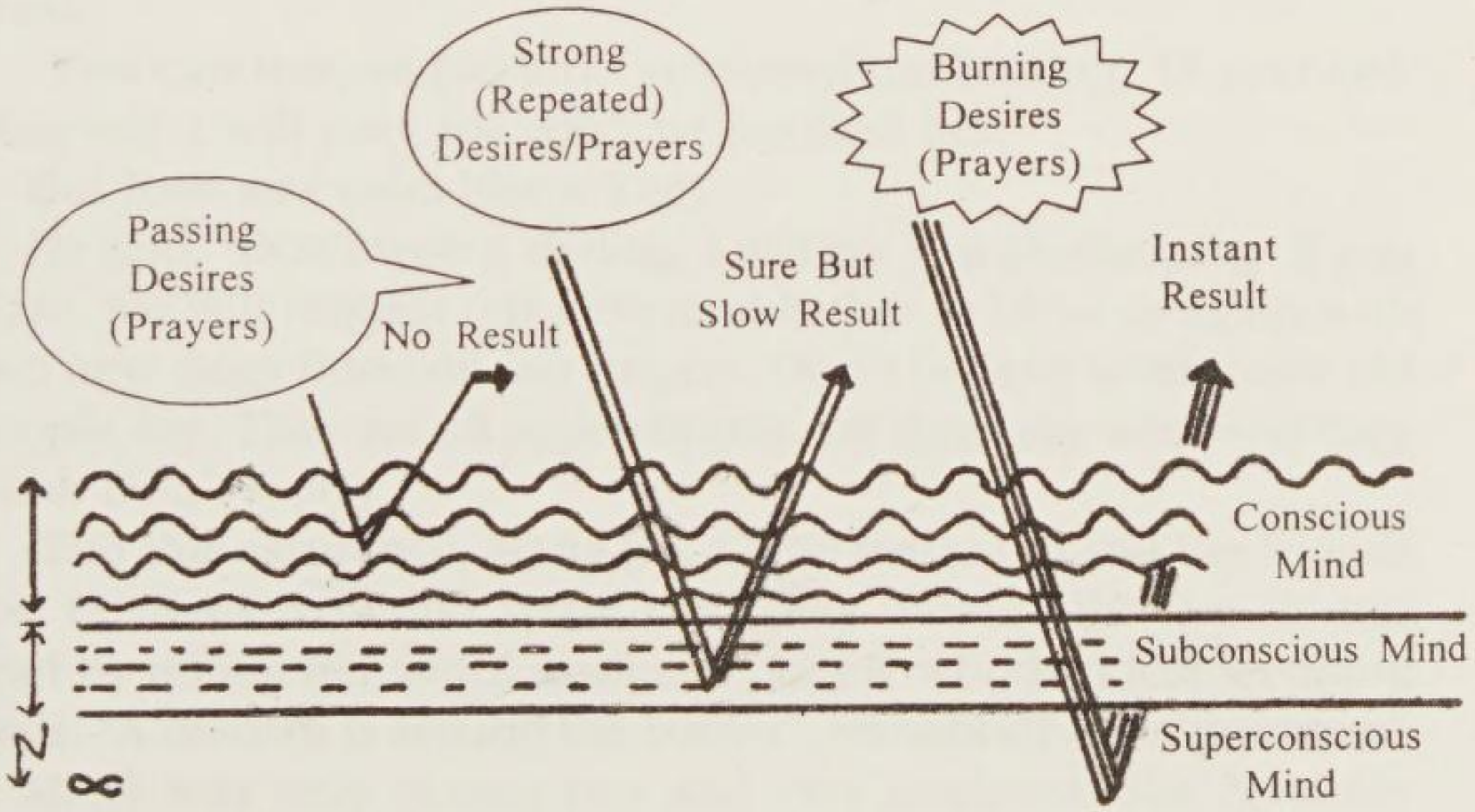
When a passing thought/desire floats around in the mental space, there is no result. The thought being momentary, it vanishes out of the conscious mind. But a burning desire like an arrow penetrates down into the sub-conscious mind (as shown in the figure) and the result comes out with a time-lag. The time factor depends on the strength of the desire and how deep is the penetration in the sub-conscious mind.

However, sometimes the thought/desire becomes as powerful as a laser beam. This happens when all means have failed; nobody is helping either. In that sheer helplessness, one surrenders the ego and approaches, the super-conscious mind or God. Then the result is instantaneous.

A classical example in Mahabharat is the help that Panchali gets from Lord Krishna in the royal court of Dhritharashtra.

Lord Krishna and Jesus Christ have done several miracles.

·Sri Satya Sai Baba shows miracles. He produces articles out of nothing and gifts them to His devotees. He has cured many disabled persons and those who were sick. This is attributed to His deep compassion and zero-ego state, which is super-conscious mind/divinity.



CHAPTER 2

PRAYERS ARE ANSWERED—HOW TO REGAIN THE PARADISE LOST?

"The mind in its own place and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven".

—JOHN MILTON in 'Paradise Lost'

How to solve the problem of Maria?

Peace and happiness along with prosperity is Paradise.
Prayer is the only resort of an individual who has lost it.

Maria married Jose with all joy and grace of religious celebration, typical of Kerala Christians. But within a few days she lost something very significant; her wedding ring had slipped into the Pampa river as she was crossing by boat. The river appeared to quickly gulp and carry it away like a big fish. In a flash she lost sight of it in the current.

"What a big tragedy!" her neighbours sympathized with her.

"How to solve Maria's problem?" her father wondered.

"This may bring some disaster! O Lord, save us!" her mother cried.

"You careless, stupid girl!" screamed her brother, 14 year-old. "Anyway I will pray for you", he pacified her.

But Jose was calm like a Yogi.

He said, "Don't worry, darling. I will get you another ring. If you want, we will request our Reverend Father to bless us again with two new rings fitted on our fingers. Don't believe what those old people say. They are all superstitious. Let them say whatever they want. Don't worry."

With this assurance, Maria felt a little better but still her friends and relatives wouldn't spare her. They 'fanned the fire' of her grief by telling her awful stories of people who had lost wedding rings. "A divorce is around the corner", somebody even predicted.

Maria was only twenty-two and very innocent. She certainly didn't want divorce. Her mother said, "Maria, only God can solve this problem. Say your prayers daily. Every Sunday, we will say

special prayers in our Church. Prayer can work wonders, I'm sure. Our Lord will solve this problem. For your sake I am going to pray every evening before going to bed."

That is exactly what they did.

What else could they do?

Maria sobbed in silence – that was her prayer. No words came out of her. 'Mother Mary understands my silent prayer', she believed.

"Mother Mary Understands My Silent Prayer"

Three months passed. The rainy season was over and the fury of the river subsided. It started flowing calmly as a stream. Maria's brother had to go to some place down the river. To get there he had to cross a sandy part of the river. As he walked across the sand, he saw something glittering in the sunshine. It was Maria's ring! The boy was overjoyed.

How mysterious! How wonderful it was for Maria and all her family members! They praised the Lord and the Holy Mother and expressed thanks with tears of joy and love.

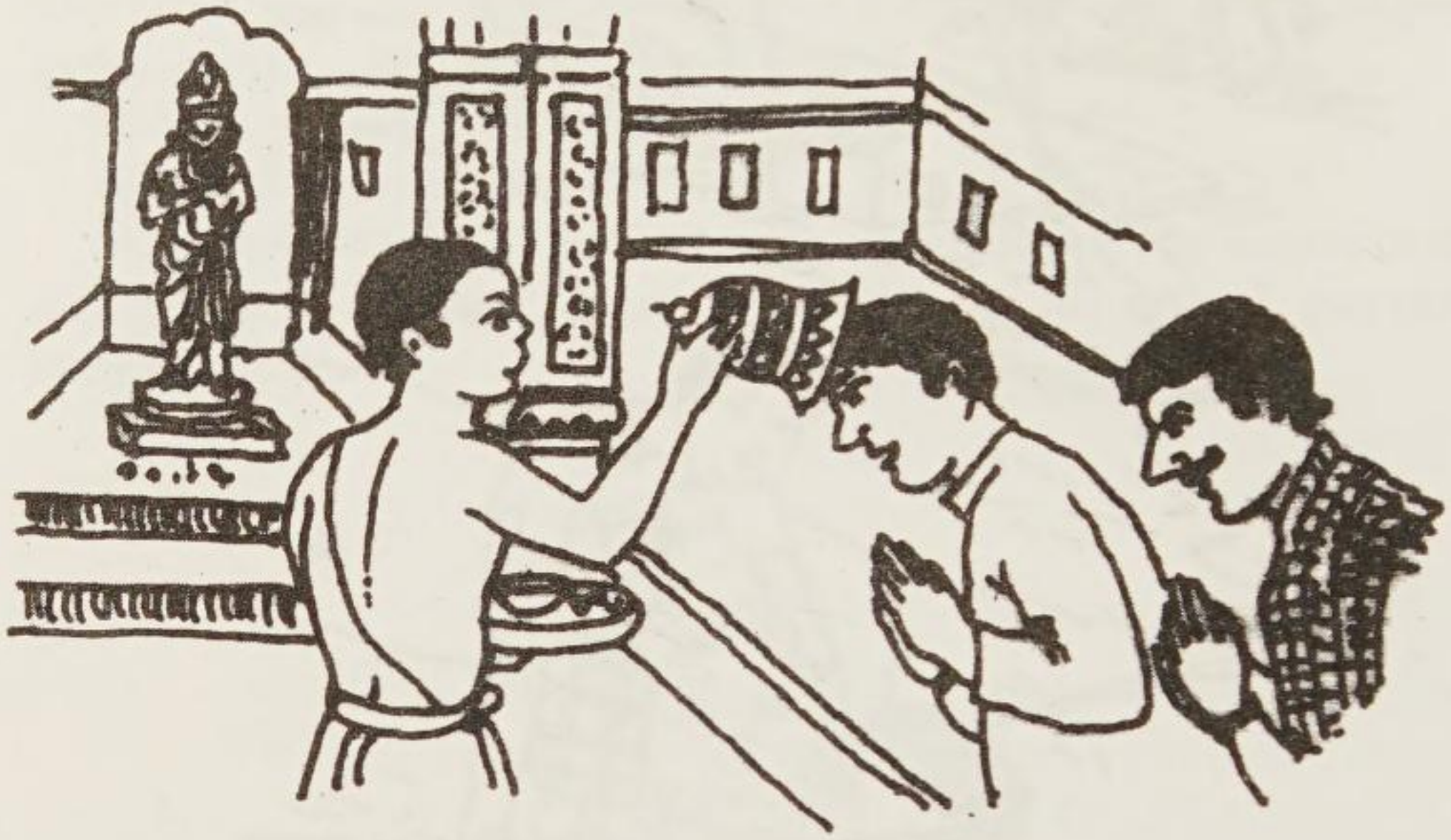
It was Maria's ring

How to regain the mother lost

In the early 1960s, an employee of a construction company lost his mother while travelling from Madras to Visakhapatnam. People often lose their money or jewellery; not one's mother! This man's mother got down from the train at midnight while both were together in a second class sleeper compartment. She was a mental patient, who had suffered severe chronic schizophrenia. She couldn't talk sensibly.

The son woke up next morning to find his mother missing. He reported the matter to the railway station master, to the police and to the personnel manager of his company. In their own ways, all three departments tried to find her. Ten days passed; there was no trace of the aged mother.

The employee was totally at a loss. He went to Mr. Nambiar, a hotel proprietor known for his good services to people. He and Nambiar went to a temple of Hanuman and offered their sincere prayer.



He and Nambiar went to a temple of Hanuman and offered their sincere prayer.

Early morning next day they started their search in a Morris-Minor car. They drove and searched many places within a distance of a hundred kilometers. When they were on the national highway near Samalkot, a monkey jumped from a tree in front of their car, as if to stop them.

A monkey jumped in front as if to stop them

Nambiar jammed on his brakes. They made a search in that area, though it appeared to be a lonely place. Nambiar had an intuition that the old lady must be somewhere there.

They saw a village-temple 200 meters away. They went to the temple and offered their prayers there. The priest, who was doing *puja*, came out and asked where they came from. They told about their mission. Then the priest said:

"Thank God, she is with me in my house! I found her following me that night while I was coming from Samalkot Railway Station. When I asked her who she was, she wouldn't speak. Finally she came up to my house. Being an old lady, my wife took her in our home. My wife has been looking after her ever since. I was hoping that someone would come to take her away".

Needless to say both Nambiar and the grieving son were so happy and full of gratitude, when they regained the mother. '

Nambiar felt that his life's purpose had been achieved. Tears of ecstasy flowed from his eyes and he thanked Anjaneya for stopping them and directing them to the priest who had so kindly looked after the mother. They fell down at the feet of the Lord in the temple and at the feet of the priest, and his wife in prostration with deep feelings of gratitude.

Hanuman is a form of God worshipped by Hindus. According to belief, he is a combination of Rama, Lakshmana and Janaki – three in one. The search started with faith in Him and, according to Nambiar, the search ended with affirmation of that faith. Nambiar said: "God is there to help us. He is the most powerful Guide and Guru. Nothing is impossible for Him! The Monkey God, Hanuman is the one who found Janaki when she was carried away by Ravana, the demon King. He crossed the ocean and went all the way to Sri Lanka. He is still alive. If you pray, He comes to your help"

Similar incredible things do happen, have happened and certainly are still happening. Some of them are narrated in this book.

How to regain the child lost?

Sri Krishna temple in Udupi, Karnataka state, is famous all over South India. The authority to worship the deity of the temple, Sri Krishna, is vested with four monasteries, called Mutts. The head of each Mutt gets right over the worship of the Lord for a year, after which the right is transferred to the next Mutt and so on.

During one year, the head of the Mutt happened to be a young swami. After midday *puja* (worship), he was giving holy water (*theertha*) to devotees including a man and his wife who were crying. They had lost their 6 year – old son, that morning. They had searched everywhere but could not find him. They had informed the police but by now, they had almost given up hope of finding him.

Swamiji was very much moved. He closed his eyes for a few seconds and told them:

"Don't worry. By this time tomorrow, you will get him back. Go home in peace. You don't have to do anything, except chant Lord's name."

Swamiji gave them some *theertha*. They received it and, feeling a little more consoled went home. They chanted the *mantra* given by their Guru thousands of times.

Next day, for receiving *theertha* from Swamiji, the couple had come with their son! The boy was kidnapped on the previous day by some miscreants. They took him by car and boarded a train. In the train, they were interrogated by a samnyasi, who managed to save the boy from the miscreants. The samnyasi brought him back and left him near the boy's house.

While receiving *theertha* the boy told his parents:

"This is the Swami who brought me back".

The parents were amazed! How is this possible? Miracles do happen.

The parents could not find words to express their profound gratitude. All they could do was, fall at the Swami's feet and sob. This Swamiji has high intuitive power and he helps many people to come out of their problems even today. He is now the Head of Vadiraja Mutt.

He chanted day and night the holy mantra "Narayana, Narayana...." as part of his spiritual practice. He ate very little food and slept hardly two or three hours. Constant remembrance of God gave him spiritual powers.

How to regain the life lost

This episode is different from other experiences.

A not-so-famous citizen of Madras was admitted in a famous hospital, well-known for good 'care and fare'. He was an alcoholic. As the proverb goes, 'an alcoholic is ever an alcoholic'. Though he

abstained from liquor for more than a year, he drank on the birthday of his close friend. That happy event was celebrated in a grand style in a posh city hotel and wine flowed like water on that occasion.

Our citizen drank like fish. By midnight he turned blue, fell unconscious and was admitted in the hospital.

In the early morning, he passed away. Three doctors, one after the other examined and pronounced him dead. His relatives and friends were about to take his body away for cremation when a Swiss lady-tourist, who was passing by, enquired: "What happened?".

She was at the hospital to see her friend who had been admitted for some medical treatment. The swiss lady was also a medical doctor. On hearing about the death, from one of the men, she halted them and immediately tried artificial resuscitation (mouth to mouth breathing method). Within a couple of minutes, the dead man came back to life. It was like God breathing life into the first man of His creation, which He has continued to do ever since.

Again love and compassion! A tourist was inspired to do so, out of her love and compassion for an unknown person, a fellow-being.

A glorious example of universal love and service!

"Thank my Lord! You brought your doctor and saved my husband!" our nearly dead man's wife felt so. All through the night, with tears in her eyes, she had prayed.

The second question: "What made the Swiss doctor try resuscitation even though all three doctors in attendance also knew how to do it? Why didn't even one of the three doctors try it, before she did?"

God only knows the answer.

The Swiss doctor was inspired to act in the way that she did. "What was the source of inspiration?"

'Love and Compassion' – in one word, it was 'God'

According to the English dictionary, one of the meanings of the word 'inspiration' is 'God's influence on the mind or soul of man'.

How to regain the knowledge of truth that Adam and Eve lost

Dr. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar ex. vice-chancellor of Andhra University, is author of many valuable books including the famous 'Sri

Arobindo', an award winning biography. He is the recipient of the Padmashree Award for his literary work. Once he told us:

"There is an invisible communication network in the universe with a central-exchange. You are connected to that. The Lord sits at the exchange and receives all messages of devotees. He directs 'His chosen ones' to go and fulfill the wishes of those devotees who are in danger or in need of His help. That is how you can achieve your goal by prayers. Prayer is the direct communion with God. He answers your prayers".

Note that 'His chosen ones' include animals such as the monkey in the anecdote, p. 15; also the river-god in anecdote, p. 13 (Rivers are also divine)

The Swiss doctor in the anecdote, p. 18 was His chosen person.

God understands every one's aspirations and desires. All good and genuine wishes are approved. Desires communicated through prayers are exempted from 'Karmic Law'.

The theory of Karma states that every desire binds the human being to the result, like a credit card. You cannot get anything in this world without giving something. But you need not give anything to God for things that He gives you, except to thank Him. Even if you don't thank Him, it makes no difference to Him. This is not so when a bank issues credit card to you. You have to pay back through your nose.

Sri Iyengar continued:

"When you pray, using any name or form of God; do so with full faith that He is the Supreme Lord, the only one God. Forms and names may differ but God is only one and the same. Don't be trapped by differences in names and forms".

This advice helped us to be free from distinctions of names and forms. We accept that all forms and names refer to that One and only God which is described in all religious books – "THAT SUPREME ONE".

We often forget this truth and get lost in controversies such as "my God!" "your God" etc. When there is only one God, why differentiate? Why fight amongst ourselves or fight within one's own mind?

There may be a thousand or more personal gods but God, the Ultimate Truth, is only One.

"Pray with a sincere and simple heart and your prayer will be heard", says Sri Ramakrishna Paramhamsa. He adds:

"As one and the same water is called by different names by different people, some calling it 'water', some 'vari' , some 'aqua' and some 'pani', so the one *sat-chit-ananda* (Existence – Bliss – Absolute) is invoked by some as God; by some as Allah, by some as Hari and by others as Brahman".

We heard:

In an international air-liner, a number of delegates representing various religious groups were going to United States to participate in the Parliament of Religions. Somewhere during the flight they started debating on "What is the 'Word' that is God?" (Ref: Bible St. John 1:1) Different words were told by each delegate. There was no consensus on the 'One Word'.

When the argument reached its climax and the scene changed into a pandemonium, the pilot walked down the aisle. He smiled. "That word is my name, Malik. You know, I have to take you to your destination now, safely. Malik means 'Master', that is also God's name – Allah Malik" Thus he added one more name to 'His innumerable names'.

So, there you are.
All words are He.
He is everything.
He is every being.

How to regain consciousness lost?

Two passengers to Delhi fell down from fast-running express trains and their experiences are extraordinary. Their fall was on two separate occasions at different places.

Mr. Nair was a devotee of Satya Sai Baba. "Sai Ram, Sai Ram" he chants constantly. Nair accidentally fell down near Nagpur. While falling down, he was still chanting "Sai Ram, Sai Ram" but with a difference. This time the call was from a helpless person, falling into the unknown, which meant, "O Sai Ram, save me".

Though he was shocked by the impact of the ground, he regained his normal consciousness within a few minutes. He felt that Sai Baba had supported him with His own hands and therefore the impact was less hard. The miracle is that he sustained no injury.

The other person who fell down was Mr. Rao. He fell down near Rajamandry.

Rao was in a coma for a month. He was hospitalized after the fall and the doctors could not make any prediction. However, within a few days they noticed a sudden change and he came back to normal awareness.

This sudden remarkable recovery was explained by Rao. like this:

I was in a dark well – that is how I felt; I didn't know anything else.

I remember having seen a flash of light as if some one was searching for me with a torch above the well. According to my wife the first thing that I uttered was 'Kr'.

I thought of Krishna –my first thought. The light lingered a little longer. Slowly I could say 'Krishna' in full and make contact with that light. Later, I could pray, "Krishna, my Lord, show me the light".

"My mother was the person who forced me to go to Gita-Class while I was a child. I used to recite Gita-verses without understanding the meaning. I don't understand Sanskrit nor the Gita. But for me Krishna is the PRIME-PERSONALITY and He is the teacher who gave me the light. This I know.

So my *pranam* to Krishna and to my mother!"

According to Late Swami Kriyananda, Om chanting/*Mantra Japa* have brought back consciousness to many persons who had lost it. So he advises doctors/any body attending to such unconscious patients, to do *mantra japa* as a therapy.

Power of a child's Prayer

Anju, just four-years was scribbling on a piece of paper with a pencil. Her mother had fallen sick three days before and Anju was not getting her mother's usual care and warmth. So she was morose and took up scribbling.

Anju's mother asked from her bed,

"What are you doing Anju?"

"Mummy, I am writing a letter to God."

"What have you written, darling? Let me see."

Anju reluctantly showed her the paper.

"I don't understand what you have written. Please read it out, my darling."

Anju read it. It was like this:
"God,
Make my Mummy alright,
She is poor and sick.
She can't do my hair and dress me up.
Dad is doing it hopelessly.
Make my Mummy all right.
Make my Dad all right.
He is very angry.
Mom says, anger is at his nose-tip.
God, make his nose cute.
So, he will love us well."

—Loving Anju

Anju's mother recovered quickly. God heard Anju's prayer.

Practice–1/1—*The supreme prayer*

The following prayer is very meaningful and profound:

Sarve bhavantu sukhinah
Om Śantih! Śantih! Śantih (Upanishad)

Meaning: May all beings in the world be happy!
Om Peace, Peace, Peace to all !

First of all, the prayer is for all beings – not exclusively for human beings or for a certain category of people; not just for one self. It includes the vegetable and animal kingdoms also.

Secondly, the most important thing prayed for is 'Peace and Happiness'. which all of us need immensely.

We can raise our hands, bring our palms close to the chest and imagine the earth as small as a ball. Bless the entire world with both palms; the effect is then more profound.

From the heart, good wishes flow to the world in the form of white light. This *Sankalpa* (Resolve) makes the prayer more subtle and effective.

Sankalpa makes the prayer more subtle and effective

Ask, seek, knock

"Ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you. Everyone who asks will receive and anyone who seeks will find and the door will be opened to him who knocks.

Would any of you, who are fathers, give your son a stone when he asks for bread?

How much more then will your Father in Heaven give good things to those who ask Him?"

—JESUS CHRIST
(From 'Good News Bible', Luke 11.9 – 13)

Practice – 1/2

From the original Sanskrit prayer, 'Sarve bhavantu sukhinah,' several prayers have sprouted in many Indian languages. Mahatma Gandhi's prayer in Hindi, is very popular all over India:

Raghupathi Raghava Rajaram,
Pathitha Pavana Sitaram
Iswar, Allah, There Nam
Sabko Sanmati de Bhagavan

Meaning:

O Lord, Raghava, Rajaram
Holy saviour of the fallen folk
Iswar, Allah are Thy Name
Give us all good mind, pure heart

Singing this prayer song in group or solo, gives immense joy, as cleansing our heart or mind is the prime need and God has to help us to achieve that noble purpose.

Teaching about prayer

When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites! They love to stand up and pray in the houses of worship and on the street corners, so that everyone will see them. I assure you, they have already been paid in full. But when you pray, go to your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. And your Father who sees what you do in private will reward you.

When you pray, do not use a lot of meaningless words, as the pagans do, who think that their gods will hear them because their prayers are long. Do not be like them. Your Father already knows what you need before you ask him. This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father in heaven,
— may your holy Name be honoured;
— may your Kingdom come;
— may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

— Give us today the food we need.
— Forgive us the wrongs we have done as we forgive the wrongs that others have done to us.
— Do not bring us to hard testing, but keep us safe from the Evil One. For yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory for ever, Amen."

—JESUS CHRIST
(From 'Good News Bible', New Testament Matthews (6-5)

CHAPTER 3

REMEMBRANCE IS *DARSHAN* (VISION)

Namasmaran (remembance of god's name)

Swami Ramdas says:

"All *sadhana* (spiritual practices) is for keeping remembrance of God unbroken. Remembrance is *darshan*. The easiest way is to take the Name of God constantly. The name is the link between the devotee and God. It brings the devotee face to face with God and enables him to realise oneness with Him. *Namasmaran* is capable of granting the universal vision by which one sees everything as God. When you take the name, you are taking the Name of the Lord who dwells in your heart."

When the Guru gave Ramdas the *Ram mantra*, he told him: "If you chant this *mantra* always, you will attain ever-lasting joy." After receiving the *mantra* Ramdas started chanting it as instructed by the Guru. He could not do any other work thereafter. Most of his time was spent in chanting the *mantra*. Then people asked him: "Is that all the teaching that you have received from the Guru? Did you not ask him any other question?"

There was no other question to be asked until Ramdas put into practice what he was asked to do. The first lesson we must learn well before we proceed to the second lesson. That lesson he was trying to put into practice. After that he found there were no questions left to be asked. All doubts dissolved, all questions disappeared and what the Guru promised he got by chanting the *mantra*. The aspiration of every one is to get happiness – real, lasting happiness and that goal was reached by chanting *Ram Nam*. Then there was nothing left to be attained and so there were no questions to be asked at all.

The *Ram mantra* that Swami Ramdas was chanting and he advised his disciples to chant constantly, is:

"Om Sriram Jairam Jai Jai Ram"

How to be a multi-millionaire (with a difference)— Ramakodi Thatha lights up the torch of eternal joy

Thatha ('*thatha*' means 'grandfather') doesn't like his name to be publicized. He chanted Lord Sri Rama's name several million times 'RAM RAM RAM ....'. People affectionately call him "Rama-Kodi-Thatha". *Kodi* means ten million. The meaning of his name Rama-Kodi-Thatha is obvious – multi-millionaire grandpa (with a difference).

He was a magistrate, whole-heartedly serving people. The very mention of Rama brings him tears of joy. He remains always in that state of joy/vibration/ecstasy, known as '*Sacchitananda*'. The name of Lord has gone deep into his sub-conscious mind and remained there as a permanent identity. The result is unconditioned joy. He practised unknowingly the scriptural advice:

"What good has it done you?" I asked him bluntly one day.

"Infinite good to me and to many others too" he says. Thatha saved many innocent people from being harassed by the rich and by the police. By intuition, he could detect false and fabricated stories, records and documents. He followed his conscience, come what may. Justice and fairness became natural to him. He has highly developed intuitive power, plus intense self-confidence. He is a man of commonsense. What more is needed for a magistrate, than these sort of qualities?

"How did you get such self-confidence?" I asked again.

"This mental exercise or '*Tapasya*' is simple and easy to practice. But it needs regularity and devotion," says Thatha.

"I was just ten years old when I attended a '*Harikadha*' – a spiritual story-narration – in my village. One learned Shastriji used to tell the 'Ramayana'. The story of Rama fascinated me. Every evening I attended without fail.

"One day, I was alone with Shastriji. He called me and said that I should repeat '*Ram Nam*' one crore times. I would then become as powerful as Hanuman.

"As a boy, I had no idea what I should become. The image of Hanuman, as a powerful personality, however, fascinated me.

"I liked the idea. From then onwards, I was chanting 'Ram-Ram-Ram' and kept a daily account. Later, I linked the name with my breathing. Along with inhalation 'Ram' and along with exhalation also 'Ram'. I soon found that I could repeat one thousand times in one hour.

I used my watch to meter the japa. While walking, cycling, waiting for bus and at any opportunity I chant. The holy name penetrated deep down and it is there in my mind all the time as a source of light and joy. No other thought haunted me. My mind became free of thoughts, a silent empty-mind. 'Empty thyself. I shall fill thee.' It happened. I was filled with joy and inspiration."

He is an enlightened Guru of many persons – one of them being 'the Bhakta' of the next anecdote. A monumental example of transformation and enlightenment is the famous Valmiki, author of Ramayana, the great epic. He was a dacoit; but by chanting '*Rama Nama*', he was purified and became a saint.

Thatha was not a rich man; but he had a very rich heart.

"To have a rich heart is the only real richness in the world."

—OSHO

Changing over to an inexpensive health – drink of ecstasy

Anjaneya – Bhakta was an employee of a ship-building company. Before he became a *bhakta* (devotee) he was a bhokta/bhogi – an enjoyer of material things, someone who is fond of eating and drinking. His body showed this in terms of weight and height. He was strong and stout and looked like Hanuman.

But his habit of drinking alcohol, made him a weak person. He spent all his money in drinking. He borrowed Rs. 20,000/-. When his debtors started pestering him he decided that he would sell a piece of land that he had inherited from his father. Meanwhile, his employer wanted to sack him because of his excessive absence from work.

Since his land was in a remote village he had trouble selling it, even though he took long leave from his company. His wife advised him to pray in the village-temple of Anjaneya and to abstain from drinking alcohol at least on Tuesdays of every week. "Anjaneya will bring the buyer to you" she said.

Many men are benefited spiritually by the advice of their wives. Religiously following his wife's advice, the Bhakta was able to sell-off his land before the expiry of his leave-period. "Hanumanji found a buyer for my land and the price I received was fair and reasonable. With that money, I was able to repay my loan", says Bhakta with extreme happiness.

But the habit of drinking alcohol still persisted. On a Saturday

evening, when his wife was out of the house for her regular weekly prayers in a nearby Venkateswara temple, Bhakta took out his whisky bottle. He then went to the next room to fetch a glass. Meanwhile, a monkey suddenly appeared on the scene. The monkey looked at Bhakta and immediately struck the bottle with his tail. The bottle fell on the ground and broke into pieces. The liquor was spilt all over the floor. Then the monkey walked out and vanished. The monkey appears to have come to show it's resentment at Bhakta's drinking habit.

The monkey struck the bottle with his tail.
The bottle fell on the ground and broke into pieces

With his glass in hand Bhakta simply watched the entire incident. He simply sat on the floor and pondered over it. How could a monkey come at exactly the moment when he went to fetch the glass and with speed of lightning hit and break the wine bottle? How could the monkey come; there was not even one monkey in the vicinity?.

Finally, he concluded that it was not an ordinary monkey. He must be Hanumanji, who had already helped him to sell his land.

From then on he turned to Sri Rama and Hanumanji. He felt that until then, he was worse than a wild creature. Now, he must reform and become Hanuman. He felt inspired.

Thus, Bhokta became 'Bhakta'. Very soon, Ramakodi thatha appeared to him as Sri Rama. He gave Bhakta much inspiration to go deep into *bhakti* (devotion). Bhakta built a small temple before his house and regularly worshipped Hanumanji. A number of devotees turned up to join him in his puja and devotional services. He became an enlightened employee of his company as well as a true *bhakta* of Anjaneya. Thatha gave him the word of God, 'Rama' which inspired him and enlightened him. *Rama Nama* proved to be a better drink more intoxicating and far healthier than booze.

When the way was not clear

The way was not clear; mind was uncertain; Vimala went to Sri Raghavendra Swami temple, in Saligramam with a mind full of confusion.

She was overwhelmed by her distress, due to her deteriorating health. She didn't know what to do.

"Swamiji, my Father, did you forsake me, your helpless daughter?" she sobbed and could not say anything further.

Without one second delay, a doctor appeared on the scene, to give her comfort and solace. Swamiji gave her all assurances through the doctor, that she would be perfectly all right in a short time. The doctor said after examining her:

"Don't worry at all. I will take full care of you. By God's grace, you will be all right very soon. Swamiji only sent me here. I was to come here only after two hours. By then you would have probably gone. But, some how, I felt strongly that I should come here now. So I asked my patients to wait."

By Swamiji's blessing, added with doctor's devotional care, Vimala returned to normal life soon after.

She continued her '*Nama Japa*' with increased faith.

Meeting Lalitha's beloved

"Where is your husband? Why are you staying alone?"

"Oh! he is in Thirupathi. I am longing to go there. But I don't know when my desire will be fulfilled."

We couldn't fully understand Lalitha's answers.

Another day.

"Can't he come here?"

"Of course, he comes; please come in; just see now; I have given him a bath and he is now here relaxing."

We went to the room to see her husband. That was her Puja-room.

Only then, we realized what she meant – 'Lord Venkatesha is her Beloved'.

"Still, don't you feel lonely at night ?"

"I am chanting His Name all the time, enjoying His company. I never know, how time passes on. It is sheer joy."

Her strongest desire was to go to Thirupathi and be with Him. It took two years to save sufficient money for her Thirupathi-trip. A friend who was very fond of Lalitha, joined her to go to Thirupathi.

The famous temple of Thirupathi-Venkatesha attracts large num-

ber of people. They wait for several hours before they have the *darshan*. Only VVIPs get quick access through front entrance; otherwise, one should be very rich to pay a large sum of money to get the quick *darshan*.

But when Lalitha and her friend reached the temple, a young Brahman boy was standing at the front entrance to receive them. He took them both quickly inside the temple though Lalitha was hesitant to go through the VVIP's path. The boy made her stand in front of Venkatesha for His *darshan*, to her heart's content. This is not possible for any ordinary pilgrim, who would be asked to move away in a few seconds to make room for others. In addition, Lalitha got a basket full of prasadam, containing *laddus, vadas, haldi, kumkum, flowers* and some cash. Usually other pilgrims have to pay but she got all free.

"O! my Lord, ... my Beloved,....my All, I have nothing to ask for, except that I should always remember you and never forget you for a moment." That was her constant prayer

She asked:

"Why are you surprised? Don't you get gift from your husband? Do you have to pay him?"

In the silence that followed, we were knowing her closely.

We knew she was really married to Venkatesha. We did *sashtanga namaskar* to her. She is so humble, full of love and compassion. She is really His consort.

"O! my Lord, ... my Beloved ....
my all, I have nothing to ask for; except that I should
always remember you and never forget you for a moment."

That was her constant prayer.

The Mantra Om

The Common Heritage of Humankind

—By Swami Nishchalananda

The mantra OM has been handed down to us by the Himalayan Sages. It is the most important mantra of Yoga. According to tradition, every 'thing' manifest, as well as all spiritual teachings, including Yoga, all languages, including Sanskrit, all scriptures, including the Vedas, have come out of its primal sound vibration. This lines up with modern scientific thinking which says that everything – every atom and molecule in every nook and corner of this universe – is based on and comprised of vibration.

Indian mystical and philosophical thinking resonates with OM. It is mentioned widely in the Upanishads (the Mandukya Up. is devoted exclusively to explaining its meaning), the Tantras, the Samkhyas and in Vedanta. It symbolizes the essence of Sanatan Dharma (the Eternal Way), the tolerant and profound conglomeration of spiritual thinking and practice, commonly known as Hinduism, out of which Yoga has come to us.

OM is an integral part of Jainism, Sikhism and Buddhism.

For thousands of years, there has been extensive commercial and cultural exchange between India and other countries, both towards the east and the west, including ancient Greece and Rome. Migrations resulted in the formation of ancient cultures such as the Assyrians, Hittites, Armenians, Persians etc. Sanskrit root words can be clearly seen in the languages currently spoken in countries as far a field as

Indonesia and Ireland. Scholars say, for example, that Lithuanian is more like Sanskrit than even modern Indian languages such as Hindi. It is well accepted that ancient Greek and Latin (the two languages regarded as the base for modern western culture) are closely related to Sanskrit.

It seems certain that Indian spiritual thinking influenced Judaism for OM (also written AUM) became AMEN. Later it was incorporated into Christianity as the same mantra AMEN. A few centuries later, it was adopted into Islam as AMIN or ALM (the Arabic 'I' is pronounced like 'u' when it appears before a consonant – refer p.282 'Gods, Sages and Kings' by David Frawley). Like most traditional Indian spiritual texts, the Koran starts with AUM in the form of ALM (ibid).

There is a further astonishing fact; the ancient mystical language of Ireland was called OGHAM (pronounced OHM, OM or AUM). Is this merely a coincidence?

Is it a coincidence that various English words derived from Latin, which have important philosophical meanings, such as OMniscient, OMnipresent and Omnipotent, start with OM. Isn't it strange (or perhaps logical!) that the last letter of the Greek alphabet is OM-ega?

Large numbers of Yoga practitioners world-wide are using the mantra OM as a means of catalyzing the mind and sliding into meditation. In the path of Gyana Yoga (the Yoga of Wisdom), it is used as a focal point for reflection in order to gain insight into its deeper meaning. Moreover, in Mantra Yoga, OM is being chanted with great benefit by even those who are committed skeptics; for its transformative power lies not in any belief but in its vibrational structure. It has the capacity to open up new dimensions and heighten perception, not because it is part of any religion, or even part of Yoga, but because of its inherent qualities.

If we are truly open, we would realize that there is nothing alien or foreign – only what we have been conditioned to think to be so. Everything, every tradition, including OM, is part of our common heritage as humans ..... Om-aum-amen-amin-alm-ogham.

"In the beginning was the Word (cosmic throb or vibration) and the Word was with God and the Word was God. AMEN (AUM)."

—Bible St. John 1:1 (Note: 'the Word' signifies the same as OM)

"OM is the primordial throb of the universe. It is the sound form of Consciousness." —Maitri Upanishad

* * *

Practice–2 — *Nama Japa or Mantra Japa*

"The Guru, when he gives the Name, infuses into it, his own spiritual power" says Swami Ramdas.

So, a Guru, a God – realized soul alone can awaken a person. You may therefore approach such a *Sadguru*, for *Mantra diksha.*

Swami Ramdas adds:

"Take the Name, with all the faith you are capable of. Repeat it without a moment's break, whether you are in the kitchen, or engaged in fetching water, taking bath, walking in the streets or doing any physical work. If you do not practise keeping the Name ever on your lips, you cannot avoid being unhappy. Know this once and for all."

All the Names/*Mantras* are equally powerful. So, what is important, is chanting the Mantra given by your Guru without a moment's break. Do not change over to another Guru/Mantra. You may consider all *sadgurus,* as different forms of one Guru/God. Adhering to one Guru and one *mantra* is most important for mental concentration and spiritual progress.

Negative Energy Transforms to Positive Energy and Divinity.
Through Nama-Japa.

Haunted House

Turned Positive

Becomes House of Lord

Dacoit

Turned Human

Becomes Saint

Sick and Invalid

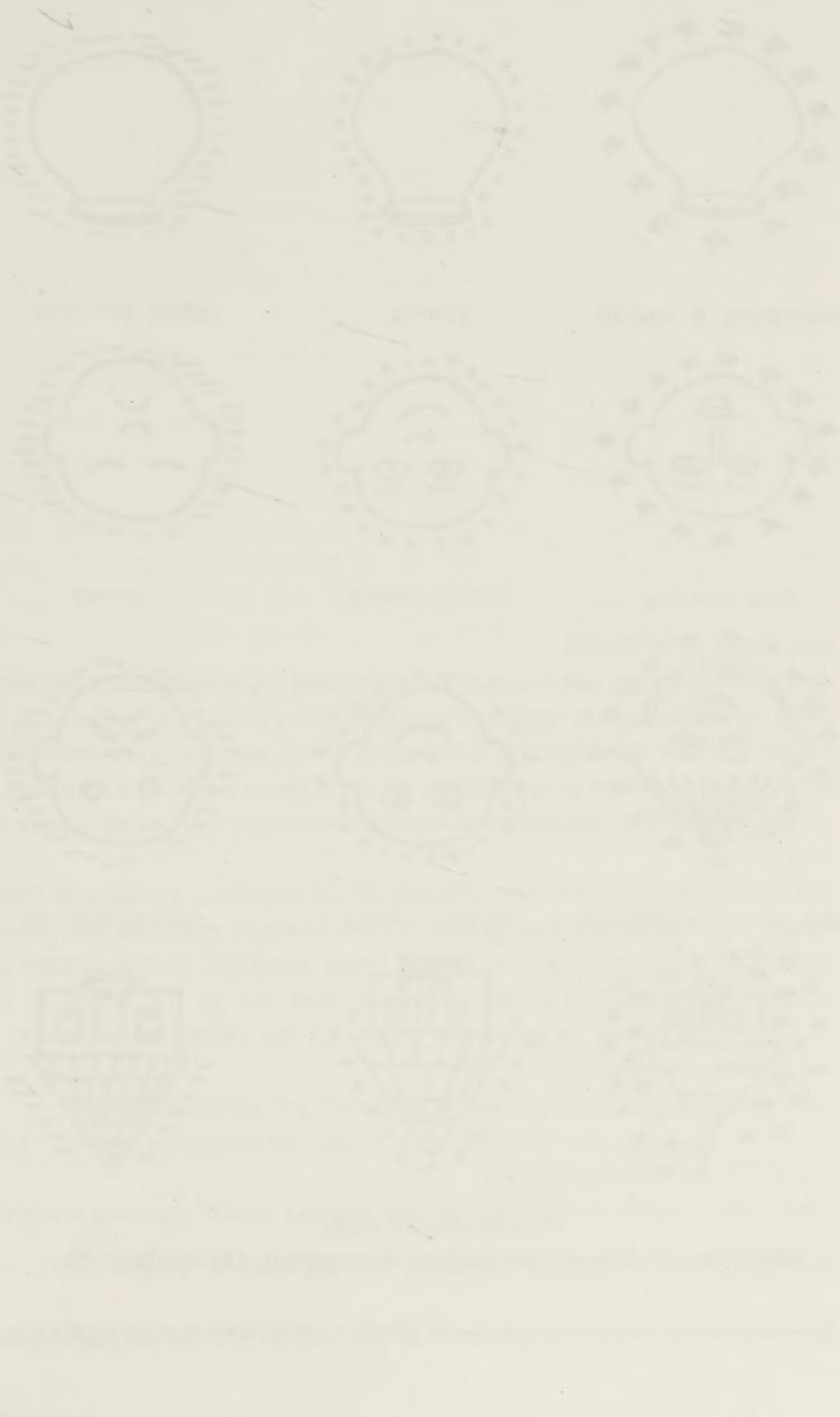
Turned

Healthy & Enlightened

Poison

Water

Nectar



CHAPTER 4

SIMPLE WORSHIP AND INCREDIBLE RESULTS

Needless to say that worship of God is a very old spiritual practice. *Puja*, as it is generally called, is a daily ritual in many religious centres. It is a deep and intense form of God-remembrance when the worship is done with love and concentration.

Though *puja* is a daily ritual in temples performed by *pujari* or priest, it can be done by any one, in one's own home, which will give immense satisfaction and joy.

Puja begins in mind with a desire to get some boon from the All-Giver, God. A student wants very high marks; so too, a business man, a housewife or any person – all want something or the other. Though *puja* is a desire gratification for oneself, it should have a prayer for the well-being of all. "*lokahsamastah sukhino bhavantu* – May the whole world be happy." Finally, a change should come in life, when one doesn't desire anything for oneself, but one will pray or do *puja* only for the sake of others – for world peace and happiness – for the well being of all. Of-course, this is a very idealistic state, achieved only by yogis and saints.

Lord Ganapathi wants only your love

Residents of a newly developed township wanted a temple to cater for their spiritual as well as material needs. They had many problems, including water-scarcity, too much gossip etc. Like-minded enthusiastic persons built a temple for Lord Ganapathi, and the installation of idol was done ceremoniously. Bala-Ganapathi, thus came to their life.

Very soon, the committee developed politics and lost their interest and Baby-Ganapathi didn't get proper attention. He received only water for breakfast.

Seeing this poor condition, one resident asked the *pujari*, why milk is not given to the Baby God. He was so sad, as if his own child was on water diet.

"Bala Ganapathi wants only your love, not milk. No body comes

even to see Him," the *pujari* said.

From then onwards, the resident and his wife started daily visits to the temple and offered milk and flowers for worship. They considered the God as their own 'Divine child'. They derived immense happiness by this simple *sadhana*. Later on, many others also turned up to the Lord.

Unwanted, unhealthy gossips reduced, giving place to healthy social get-together and co-operation. Thus, negative thoughts were overcome by positive thoughts. The residents enjoyed peace and happiness, thereafter.

"College admission, paying premium? No"—Says the Lord

Our darling grand children,

Vivek was sixteen years when he passed out of his XIIth Class. He was not sure what to do next. He didn't have the financial strength to pay premium to college for professional-course.

Like his friends, he was trying for admission in various colleges and, at the same time, admission to the Defence Academy. At this juncture, he was advised to do Ganapathi *Puja* by one of his aunts.

"Lord Ganapathi will decide what is best for you," she told him.

The boy was caught up by this idea and he started doing the *puja* by himself, with full concentration. His father was away in Saudi Arabia and so he had to get admission by his own efforts. Being young and not having much experience, he totally relied upon "Ganapathi" for help and guidance.

Before the final *puja*, he got admission in one college as well as in the Defence Academy. The competition was very tight in both cases. Vivek finally chose the Defence Academy, since the academy takes care of his further education and career throughout his life.

He felt that he is in the safe hands of Ganapathi for his whole life. Being a loving boy, he started sending a big portion of his stipend to his mother, every month. He was grateful to his aunt for suggesting Ganapathi *Puja*.

How to find a suitable bridegroom on time

Born of a middle class family,. two girls of 24 & 26 had completed their University education and were awaiting to be

married off. The younger girl "Padmini" had an offer of marriage and the bride-groom's parents were pressing for the marriage to be conducted as soon as possible. Padmini's mother was not so happy to see the younger girl married, while her elder daughter "Padmaja" remained single. She prayed to "Lord Vinayaka" to arrange marriages for both the girls at the same time.

Vighneswara *Puja* was performed every Tuesday. The idol of Vighneswara was smeared with sandalwood paste from head to foot. Before the sixteenth *puja* day, which was the culmination of the prescribed *puja* period, the elder girl's marriage was also discussed and finalized. Both marriages were conducted on the same day, at the same place.

This is only one example of the infinite boons that Vighneswara bestows on devotees.

Vinayaka, Vighneswara, Ganapathi, Ganesh – all are synonyms.

Problem of Impotency solved

A married couple, found out in their life, that their happiness was slowly draining out and disappointment was creeping in. The reason was that they did not have a child although eight years passed since their marriage. Their so-called friends and relatives started teasing them also, "Any Good News?"– they would ask. It only served as a reminder of their agony. On medical examination, it was revealed that one of them had some hormonal problem in the body and they were told that there was no treatment for this deficiency.

The lady came to know of the 'Vinayaka *Puja*'. She started right earnestly, conducting this simple *puja*, with faith. Before the *puja* of 16 weeks was over, she became pregnant, to the great amazement and jubilation of the couple.

A healthy baby was born to them.

How to save marriage from divorce

In another instance, a married couple had difference of opinion and they lived separately. After the wife taking up Vinayaka *Puja*, the differences narrowed down. Before very long, both the man and his wife settled down and started living together.

This type of situations have arisen to many and so many marriages on the verge of divorces were re-instated and loving relation restored by the Lord. God is the only Saviour.

Practice—Simple *Puja*

One day, a devotee of Raghavendra Swamy, heard an inner-voice: "Do Vighneswara *Puja*. Pass on this message to as many devotees as you can."

The vast majority of persons who did this *puja* got benefit.

The *puja* is simple and any person can do it. But you must do it without any break and with as much concentration as you can manage.

Smear chandana paste/sandalwood powder soaked in water over a well-washed Ganapathi idol, stone or metal. A complete covering is required. Place the idol on a plate, stainless steel, brass or silver– as you like.

Perform *puja* with flowers or *tulsi*. You must light up a lamp before doing the *puja*. Incense sticks can also be used. A cup of water is a must. Milk is optional.

Perform Mantra jàpa 108 times. The Mantra is:

"Om Sri Vighnesvaraya Namah"

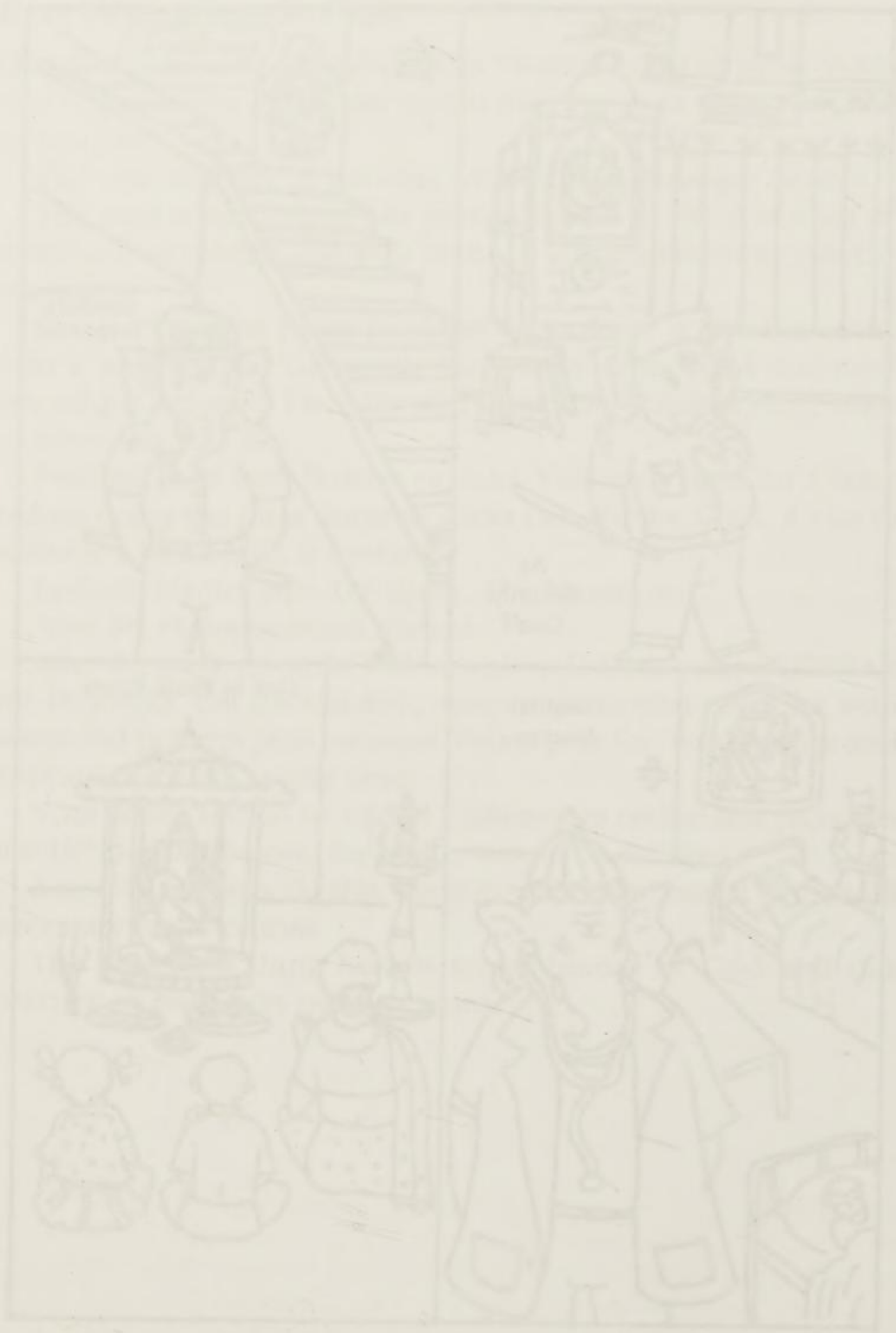
After the *puja*, do *arthi* with camphor. Do this every TUESDAY for 16 weeks. On the last day, remove the sandal covering with water and perform *puja*, as usual. Please pray for 'world peace and happiness for all', every time.

Your desire should be told to Vighnesvara on the first *puja*. On the 16th *puja* or before, the desire would be fulfilled.

A non-Hindu may do this worship with his personal deity with necessary modifications.

The important thing here is remembrance of God and this practice of *puja* suits many persons.

Different Roles Played by Lord Vinayaka in Cities and Towns.



CHAPTER 5

PRADAKSHINA NAMASKARA– A HOTLINE COMMUNION WITH THE ALL-GIVER

What is all-this, about?

There is a wonderful practice called *'Pradakshina'* – known to many people. In Manthralayam as well as in all Swami Raghavendra temples, this practice is done with a fervour, unseen in other places of worship. By going round several times, all along with constant God-remembrance, chanting His Name and prostrating many times, a centrifugal force is experienced pulling our minds, directly towards the centre, that is God.

By this practice, vagrant thoughts are reduced and mind slowly becomes steady and calm. Direct communion with God is then established.

In Manthralayam, devotees go to the river Thungabhadra, very early in the morning and after taking bath, they perform *pradakshina* – namaskar as many times as they planned to do. Very soon, they realize the divine influence and enjoy their practice. Many devotees get dreams in the night through which Swami Raghavendra appears and communicates His message. That would be the solution to their problems. Even without dreams, Swamiji would meet their requirements, much to their satisfaction and wonder.

The following anecdotes illustrate the above statement. Sri Raghavendra and Manthralayam are quoted as typical examples. We have seen and experienced the same phenomenon in other places as well. That shows, a *sadhak* can choose any quiet temple or ashram to achieve this incredible experience. What is important, is his faith in God/Guru. God remembrance is again, the main theme.

How to get non-repayable credit from the invisible bank?

Maruthi Rao had a desire to see his third and the youngest daughter's marriage performed before he passes away from this world. However, being in his late-seventies and retired from service, he could not search for a groom nor negotiate his daughter's marriage. He left everything to God in the form of Raghavendra Swamiji. He spent all his time doing self-less service in the temple – cleaning, painting, doing *puja*, arranging things and looking after devotees. His wife started complaining that he spent no time looking after his family. This situation continued for a few years, until almost a miracle happened.

A postcard arrived from an unknown person with a marriage proposal for his daughter. It was an offer without dowry and free of conditions, normally stipulated by a bridegroom's parents. Their expectation in terms of finance and ceremony was also low. They wanted a simple marriage with minimum requirements.

The horoscopes were compatible and the marriage was finalized. Since only a small sum of money was left in his bank account and this would be required for family maintenance, Maruthi Rao wondered how he could raise a sufficiently large loan to conduct his daughter's marriage. Who would give him a loan when he was already retired from service and had reached the last stage of life? All these problems were well taken care of by Swamiji.

A few people with whom he had slight acquaintance and some others with whom he had absolutely no acquaintance, came forward unexpectedly and offered all the things necessary for the marriage. They sent gifts valuable and essential, such as golden ornaments, silk sarees for the bride and dresses for everybody in his family. Thus a big portion of the marriage expenses was covered. Maruthi Rao received help from every quarter, even to the minute detail. One person even gave a *"mangala sutra"*.* Thus his financial burden was considerably reduced. In addition to these material things, his friends and relatives volunteered all the help necessary on the occasion. They showered a lot of hospitality and warmth on all invitees for the marriage which everybody appreciated. The festivities including dinner, lunch, tea and snacks – all were provided with care and attention. Everyone who attended the marriage,

appreciated the warmth with which they were received, and blessed the newly married couple whole–heartedly.

Very few knew the truth that Sri Raghavendraswami was doing all these arrangements through his chosen devotees. Maruthi Rao was in tears of ecstasy when he told his experience to us. His heart was full of gratitude to the Lord. How can meagre words express it?

(*) *'Mangala Sutra'* is a symbol made of gold. It is worn around neck by the bride, as a mark of her position as wife. Usually it is attached to a gold chain or bare thread and tied up on the marriage-day by the bridegroom as a very important ritual, considered to be very auspicious, as wedding ring.

How to host a marriage lunch without money

Raju and his family members of Nellore, in Andhra Pradesh are regular visitors to Swamiji. Once, Raju rushed to Mantralaya because he was desperate and helpless. His daughter's marriage had been fixed. All his personal savings and resources were just sufficient to give the dowry. Having paid the dowry as an advance amount in the deal, he was left with nothing.

A sum of Rs. 30,000/- was required to provide lunch, tea, snacks etc for the guests. This amount had been promised by a friend, but just before the marriage, the friend informed Raju that he was not able to give him the loan. Hardly three days were left before the marriage and Raju quite naturally was in a crisis. He did not know what to do. He had already borrowed money from others to pay off the dowry. He had no one else to help him. After prayers and *Pradakshina Namaskar*, Raju returned to Nellore from Mantralaya with new hopes. He had passed on the problem to Swamiji and surrendered himself to that ever-compassionate Guru.

Next morning, a cart loaded with all the necessary items arrived before his house! Raju was informed by the cart-driver that this is a gift from Swamiji through a merchant of the locality. The merchant saw a dream of Swamiji asking him to send all things necessary to feed three hundred persons with lunch, tea and snacks. The merchant was also a devotee of Sri Raghavendraswami. Within a few minutes, the merchant also arrived at Raju's residence and requested him to accept the gift of Swamiji.

This is only one illustration of the many ways Swamiji rushes to help his devotees in time of need.

Next morning a cart loaded with all the necessary items arrived before his house

Where to find the money to pay a huge dowry?

In all the states of India, many families are by tradition attached to temples. The family members consider that they are servants of the deity worshipped in that particular temple. The term by which they call themselves is ADIMA, which means 'slave'. But it is not the system of slavery which prevailed in Europe and America in 18th and 19th century where slaves were tortured by their masters. These families consider that the Master (i.e the God or Goddess) is their kind protector and saviour. In times of distress, they turn to that form of God for help. They regularly visit temples and offer their prayers. They make several *pradakshina namaskar* as a spiritual practice.

One such family, attached to Goddess Durga, had a financial problem at the time of their daughter's marriage. The girl, Lalitha was fair, good looking and had a university degree. She was working as a teacher in the local school. However, a sum of Rs. 1,00,000 was demanded as dowry by the parents of the boy

whose horoscope had matched with that of Lalitha.

Lalitha's parents were eager to perform the marriage, as she was already 28 years. They felt that her marriage was already overdue. But they did not have the financial strength to pay the required dowry.

Lalitha's mother immediately went to their family deity and prayed for help. Next day, an unknown Muslim gentleman came to their house. The family owned a small piece of barren land in a remote place, which was difficult to sell. Though they had tried hard to sell the land, through brokers and advertisements in the local newspapers, they had no offers.

Without hesitation, the Muslim gentleman offered to purchase the land for one lakh of rupees – far more than its value. This amount exactly covered the dowry. The timely offer was accepted with great joy. The marriage was conducted simply in the temple of Durga where they felt the grace of the Universal Mother, throughout the entire ceremony.

They thanked the Divine Mother for the rest of their lives.

Under his umbrella, the fallen are raised

A certain businessman of Bangalore had an electronics dealership and was selling goods such as televisions, tape-recorders etc. Though he hailed from Tamil Nadu, he had been in Bangalore for many years. His business prospered and he had a big shop with a high turnover.

Being a devotee of Swamiji, he was very peaceful and contented and his customers liked him.

All of a sudden, the political climate changed and people of Tamil origin were asked to go back by the local trouble-makers. His shop was ransacked and he lost everything, the total loss being more than a few lakhs rupees.

In the night, a few ruffians also raided his house. His daughter was being pulled out, and carried away by them. The businessman shouted for help but nobody in the neighbourhood came forward. By Swamiji's grace and quite unexpectedly, a Muslim, strong and powerful, intervened and saved his daughter. Thereafter, the businessman and his family felt very insecure , locked up their house and came to Mantralaya. He had made already written complaints to the local administration and

to the police in Bangalore but did not get any response.

They stayed in Mantralaya for just two days, doing *pradakshina namaskar* Swamiji appeared in a dream on the second night and told the businessman to go back to Bangalore and contact the local administration. He gave the reference number and particular department who would give him a compensation. The businessman was happy to go back and start his business afresh and he was confident that Swamiji would do everything to bring him back to his old position.

The Poor pedlar gets a purse

This happened in Saligramam, Chennai, like many other anecdotes of this book.

A poor pedlar selling plastic toys and balloons for children used to pass before Raghavendra Swamy Brindavanam, every morning and evening. He would just earn a square meal every day but nothing more. However, parking his three-wheeled-cart of toys in front of the temple, he made it his practice to pray at the temple just for a few seconds.

Deepavali was approaching and that was the time when he would go to his native village and spend a week there with his wife and two children. This year, he wanted Rs. 100/- for the trip but he did not have the money. So he prayed the Lord:

"O! Swamiji, please give me Rs. 100/- to go home and celebrate Deepavali".

Within a few days, he found a purse lying on the road just in front of the temple. It was the week just prior to Deepavali. He took it and looked inside. He was astonished. It was full of Rs. 100/- currency notes. For a moment, he was stunned. However he took the purse inside the temple and asked Swamiji through his prayer "What shall I do with this money, my Lord?"

He got an answer from within "Take what you need".

So he took one Rs. 100/- note put the balance in the hundi and walked out.

While going out, he asked the temple secretary whether what he did was right or wrong. The secretary told him that he did as was told by his conscience and therefore it must be ok. "It must be Swamiji's gift to you for Deepavali!" he added.

Practice – 4—*Pradakshina Namaskar*

Age and physical strength are the two factors that one should take care of. Within such limitations, the devotee can decide the number of *pradakshinas* and type of *namaskara*.

During each round, 8 or 9 *namaskara* can be done. One general practice: The four corners of the temple and their four mid-points are chosen as *Namaskar* locations. *Namaskara* can be simple salutation or vigorous *sashtanga namaskar*, depending on one's ability. A total of 108 *namaskar* is the usual practice, in a day.

For persons practising Suryanamaskar, *sashtanga namaskar* is easy. However, the devotee should relax on Shavasana afterwords, to regain the lost energy. Undue strain is not suggested and the devotee shall be able to continue this practice daily as a part of his sadhana.

Chanting the *Mantra*, throughout the *pradakshina* and *namaskar* is very essential. Exclusion of other thoughts and concentration on the Lord is the essence of the practice. *Mantra Japa* along with the physical exercise, is therefore more effective, and the communion with God is instantaneous.

CHAPTER 6

GOING ON A PILGRIMAGE WHEN YOU ARE JAMMED

"To come in contact with saints in holy places and to remember God constantly, God took him on a pilgrimage," so says Swami Ramdas about his pilgrimage to various holy places.

Swami Ramdas on his pilgrimage to Jagannath Puri

The train rode on; Jagannath Puri was reached in the evening. The night was spent on the verandah of a *Dharmashala*. The cold here was also very great. Next morning both Sadhuram and Ramdas went up to a large tank, outside the city and finishing bath and ablutions, they directed their steps to the famous temple of Jagannath. The beautiful white dome was visible high up in the sky from any place in that pious city. Now they found themselves at the great door of the temple. But how to get entrance? The doorway was completely blocked up by the rushing crowd of pilgrims. There was a good deal of elbowing, pushing and kicking in the thick and struggling mass of humanity. Looking on this state of things, Ramdas with hands joined in salutation, spoke thus:

"O Ram! How can Thy poor slave gain access in this rush of men and obtain Thy *darshan*? There appears to be no chance for him – a weak and helpless fakir."

Scarcely were these words uttered, when from the crowd at the entrance, out came a tall Brahman and approaching him, took him by the hand, led him to the door and using all his strength he pressed himself through the thick crowd and making a passage, conducted the bewildered Ramdas along with him. It all appeared like a dream! Ramdas had now become unconscious of his body and plunged into the communion with the Almighty Ram. In about five minutes, he was standing before the big idol of Jagannath. The Brahman still holding him by the hand, Ramdas laid his head at the feet of this idol.

This over, the Brahman took him for a round of the temple. O Ram! What words can convey Thy kindness to Thy slave! All glory to Thee. All along, while going round, he was immersed in a strange ecstasy, tears flowing down profusely from his eyes. What joy indescribable! Oh! One moment of that existence out-weighs all the pleasures of the world. A few minutes later, he and the Brahman guide were out again at the very place where from he had been fetched. Here procuring some *prasad* i.e boiled rice, the Brahman put it into the mouth of Ramdas.

"Now my work is over," said he and was going inside the temple leaving him; but before he did so, Ramdas was somehow impelled to put him a question:

"Brother, how was it, you were so kind to a wandering sadhu whom you took into the temple for *darshan*?"

"Jagannath alone can answer your question," replied the Brahman. "No sooner did I see you, than a strange desire seized me to take you in and get you the *darshan* of Jagannath. Why I did all this,I cannot explain – it was all the work of God."

Certainly Ram's work!

(From the book 'IN QUEST OF GOD' by Swami Ramdas)

A spiritual education tour–pilgrimage to four *Jyothirlingas* of Siva

Kashi

Jyothirlingas are *Sivalingas* originated by themselves; naturally formed.

Many things that happen during a pilgrimage may appear to be very casual and ordinary. But for a contemplative pilgrim, they are very meaningful, purposeful and educative.

In Kashi, we saw a pilgrim bathing in Ganga river while her husband was waiting on the steps. He asked his wife to finish off her bath quickly.

This annoyed the lady so much that she shouted: ''After how many years of yearning, have I come to Kashi? Look at this man! He won't allow me to bathe peacefully. He won't give me peace here too!. Hare Ram! Hare Ram! ....

Look at his impatience! Namah Sivaya Om Namah Sivaya ....". She was nicely inter-weaving prayer and scolding. This continued

for quite some time to our amusement. Her voice was loud and full of emotions.

The husband was silent and still, like Sivalinga. He presented himself as a model husband. He was Siva in meditation, aware but unperturbed. Lord Siva was teaching a lesson, through a real life-drama. "Don't react. Enjoy the drama of life as a witness/spectator."

Nagara-Sankeertan of 'Krishna Consciousness' pilgrims was inspiring. They were going along the bank of Ganga singing and dancing. Foreign pilgrims were taking a leading role – International brotherhood of *bhakti*, true love! "Lord Viswanath, you are incred-ible! You are inspiring millions of pilgrims coming here for your *darshan*."

In the large crowd of all nationalities, we were also flowing along the streets of Kashi, like two drops in the river of consciousness. All human differences sank and vanished. We lost a great deal of our ego, at least momentarily, leading us to indescribable joy.

Is this not an incredible result of pilgrimage?

Omkareswar

75 km south of Indore is Omkareswar, by the side of river Narmada. The hilly terrain and valley with temples on either side of the river, connected by a single-span bridge, presented a panoramic view.

Unlike Kashi, Omkareswar is quiet and lonely. After 6 pm, most of the pilgrims coming from nearby villages return. Except a fewtea shops and hotels, there is nothing in that forest area. 'Yatri Nivas', a tourist home is the reasonably furnished accommodation, besides a few choultries.

Adi Sankara found here his Guruji - Sri Govinda Bhagavadpada. The cave in which Sri Sankara did *tapas* and got enlightenment is at the bottom terrain of Omkareswar temple. The Jyothir linga is surrounded by water, drawn from the river 200 below; that baffles all hydraulic engineers! They are not able to explain how water can go up 200 above without pumping.

Naturally – formed *Siva lingas* are found in river bed. They are collected and sold by shop keepers. When we asked a pilgrim whether they were naturally formed, he replied, 'Idhar-ka harek pathar, Bhagavan shankari hai'. In short, 'God is in everything that

you see' is the communication we received. "*Satyam – Sivam – Sundaram*!" Everything here is genuinely true and beautiful and don't be a doubting Thomas – He meant so.

"Of all words, I am Om" says the Lord in Bhagawad Gita. Omkareswar reaffirms this truth.

Mahakaleeswar

In the heart of Ujjain, the seat of ancient wisdom and culture, rises up Mahakaleeswar, by the side of river Shipra, as holy as Ganga.

The main temple has an upper storey for Omkareswar and the lower is for Mahakaleeswar. The two aspects of God, the one with form and the other formless, are thus presented so beautifully.

On the wall of the temple, we saw the paintings of twelve *jyothir lingas* and their geographical locations.

At Sandeepani ashram by the side of shipra river, 5 km from Mahakaleeswar, a serene and peaceful atmosphere prevails – Srikrishna, Balarama and Kuchela lived as disciples of Maharshi Sandeepani. Maharshi's *Samadhi* is there. Lord Siva stands as a School-Inspector at the entrance, enjoying the scene of Maharshi teaching and Krishna learning! Imagining the scene, one gets ecstasy.

Baidyanath Dham

An interesting story is being told of this temple 200 km north of Calcutta. As illustrated in many puranic stories, Ravana, the personification of ego, fails to achieve his objective. He wanted to carry away this *Sivalinga* to Lanka. Disappointment made him outrageous and he struck hard at *Sivalinga* – the obvious reaction of an angry person!

This is one explanation given for the *linga* having sunk into the pedestal. We don't see the *linga* there; only a very small portion is visible down the pit of pedestal. The inner principle is that Siva, as Chief Physician resides within every one. "Look within; you will find," Siva appears to be saying. Baidyanath means Chief Physician.

After all, who is healing? Who is joining fractured bones, broken nerves and blood-vessels? Who is keeping us alive and healthy? He alone does it. Doctors are only helping the process of healing. But God is the one healing/curing the diseases.

Devotees carrying Ganga water, walk 100 km from the river to

temple. *Sashtanga Namaskar* for every step is also a common *sadhana* (spiritual exercise). A feeling of ease and health was experienced by us as soon as we reached there. Through a dream, the Lord advised to eat doodh peda and rosagola as His *prasad* cum medicine, for my ailments. We became all right by this treatment of Lord Baidyanath. Oh Lord! every thing that you give us is your *prasad*. We thank you, thank you. for solving our problems and healing us mentally and physically.

Amma's love and special darshan at Sri Rangam

Vimala and her husband visited Srirangam during their pilgrimage and went to the famous temple of Sri Ranganatha Swami. In their excitement of seeing many beautiful things inside the temple, they didn't know how quickly the time passed away. After visiting Sri Ranganatha Swami they went to see His Consort. By then the Mother's temple was already closed, because it was past 9 o'clock in the night. All the pujaris had gone away by then. However, Vimala and her husband did *pradakshina* around the temple and after prostration before the Mother, were about to go away, tinched with a feeling of disappointment when a boy of about 15 years old came there and opened the temple. Immediately, two pujaris were also seen there. The pujaris did '*Arthi*'. Vimala and her husband were extremely happy for getting *darshan* of the Universal Mother, inspite of their late arrival. They thanked the Mother for this special favour.

The temple-guide ascertained that never before such a wonder ever happened. After the scheduled closing, how the temple was opened, still remains a mystery.

One of the Pujaris told Vimala's husband, "Your wife is the beloved child of the Mother – Divine and you must take good care of her". This coincided with Vimala's belief as well as that of her parents and relatives, including her husband that Vimala is the beloved child of the Mother – Divine. The words echoed in the mind of Vimala and her husband for many years to come re-inforcing, their trust in God, and also their mutual love.

Mantralayam – a popular pilgrim centre

Like Lourdes in France and Sabarimala in Kerala, Mantralayam in South India is a spiritual centre of repute.

Situated on the rail route, half-way between Bombay and Madras, the pilgrim centre is calm and serene, like the Thungabhadra river, which flows by its side. Towards the end of His life Sri Raghavendra Swami (1596-1671) chose to live in this place. He propounded His philosophy, which is in tune with the Madhwa philosophy of *Dwaitha*. Here is His *Jeeva-Samadhi* called Vrindavanam. In all Raghavendra Swami temples, the day of His *Jeeva-Samadhi*[1] is celebrated every year in August, with *puja*, *homam* and *annadanam* (feast).

Before entering *Jeeva-Samadhi*, He told His disciples that He would live there in the Vrindavanam for many years. During this period, He would protect and help all those who seek His help.

This is exactly what is happening now. Every day, not less than 2000 people go there for His *darshan*. Every one has some need for something or the other. He attends to their prayers. Many persons have received answers through dreams. He has helped many in different ways; some of these ways are mentioned in this book.

Like Jesus Christ, Swamiji performed many miracles. He is remembered equally by his Muslim and Hindu devotees. He has raised the dead, healed the sick and given wealth to those who needed and deserved it. His grace is showered in abundance to His devotees in all parts of the world.

Swamiji welcomes the pilgrims

Three sisters came to Mantralayam on a pilgrimage. The eldest of them, about 35 years had problems in her marriage. The other two, 28 and 30 years, had not yet married, inspite of a long wait. Their disappointment amounted to a terrifying fear that they may not get married at all. They had planned to stay for a month in Mantralayam and do a lot of seva/service in the temple.

They stayed in the beautiful temple-guesthouse but took their lunch in a nearby hotel. There is an arrangement in Swamiji's temple that everybody will be served with a free

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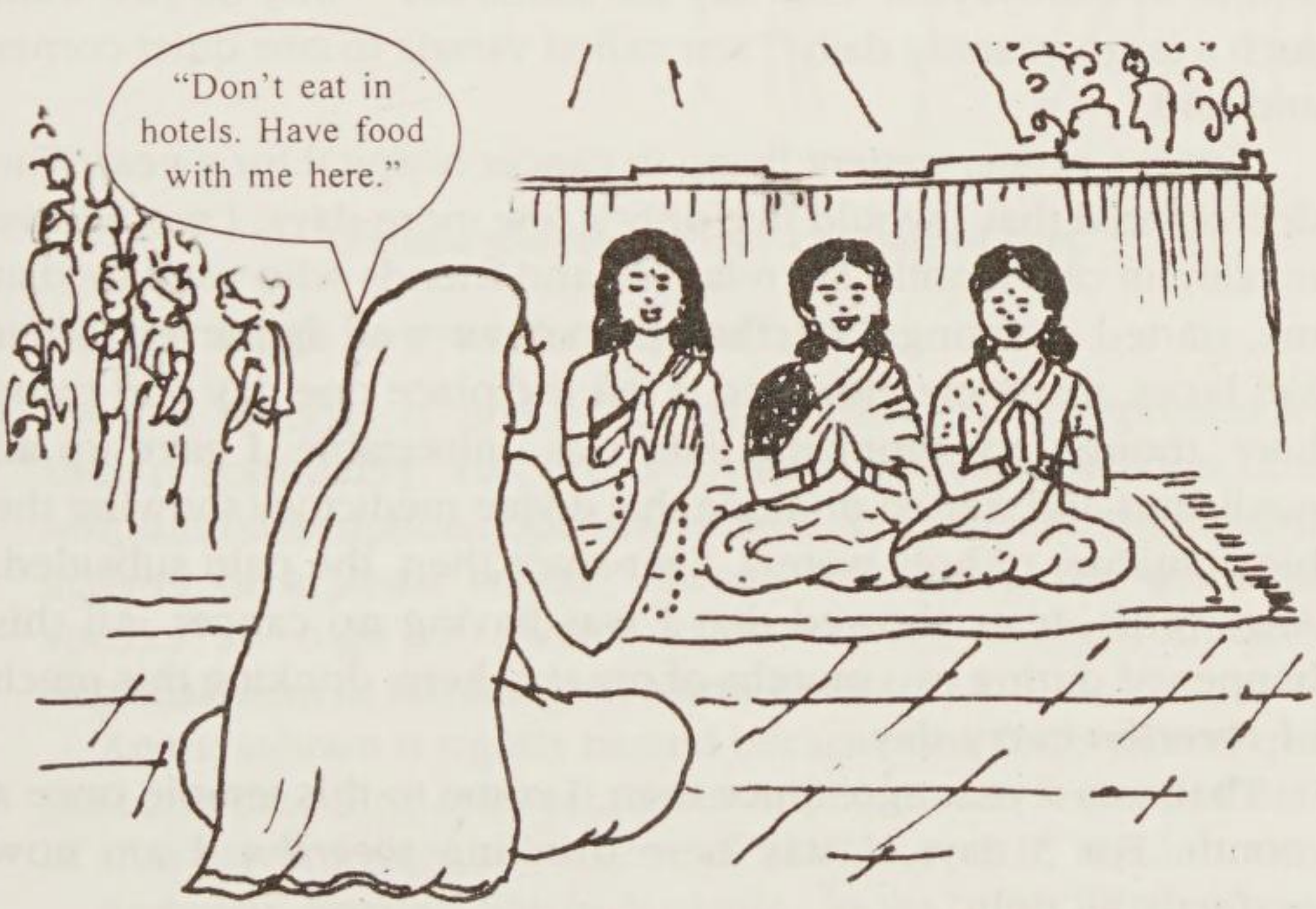
1. *Jeeva Samadhi* is a rare phenomenon. A few saints, before casting away their bodies, built for themselves, their tombs and entered alive into that structure, with instruction to their disciples to close the top with slabs.

sumptuous lunch, no matter what the size of the crowd is. The three sisters knew about this arrangement but still preferred to eat their lunch outside the temple, in a hotel. The *Anna-Prasad*, the midday lunch is sacred, for it gives devotees the opportunity to eat with Swamiji, in the company of the Lord. When we eat '*Annaprasad*' with a large number of devotees, it has a lot of significance. The Collective – Consciousness generates a feeling of oneness, one family and oneness with God. Though the food is simple, it turns out to be more tasty and enjoyable than any other grand-lunch that one might have tasted elsewhere. It has a powerful healing effect. Swami Raghavendra went into *Samadhi* 328 years ago. His presence is still felt by devotees. Swamiji appeared in a dream to the eldest of the 3 sisters and told her: "I know each one of your problems. Forget them. Eat lunch with me every day. Your problems will be solved".

How to explain the love of the Lord!



"Eat lunch with me here, everyday," says Swamiji.

"Your heart is Vrindavanam"—says Swamiji

A rich industrialist of Bombay became almost a pauper by gambling on horse-races. He had many bad habits, both immoral and

expensive. Somehow, the gravity and danger of his life-style entered his mind. A few good friends advised him to go on a pilgrimage and he chose Mantralayam. He went there for a long stay for self-purification.

At the end of a month's rigorous penance, Swamiji appeared in a dream and consoled him. He asked the broken-man to rebuild himself by going back to his own house and added:

"Your house is Manthralayam (temple)
Your heart is Vrindavanam (seat of God)"

The devotee carried with him these precious words which proved to be the key for his later-on success in life. He was ever-grateful to the great Guru. He visits Mantralayam every year with a heart full of gratitude and love.

Cure for terminal disease at Guruvayoor

Vimala spotted out a lady in that crowd collecting almost two litres of holy water daily from the Sanctum-Sanctorum of Sri Krishna temple in Guruvayoor. One day she asked her: ''why do you want such a large quantity daily?" She called Vimala to one quiet corner and said:

"I was a cancer patient living in cancer hospital for a year. The doctors told that I would live only a few more days; I would live maximum one month. My relatives and friends who used to visit me, started counting days, though they were all aggrieved. Their sad faces, made me more sad. I left the place one day and came here, though my agonizing pain was unbearable. I gave up all medicines and started drinking this divine medicine (showing the big container of holy water). Ever since then, the pain subsided. Afterwards, tests showed that I was having no cancer. All this happened during two months of my stay here, drinking this much of *theertha* every day.

That was a year ago. Since then, I come to this temple once a month. For 3 days, I stay here drinking *theertha*. I am now perfectly all right".

The lady was bubbling with joy and gratitude to the Lord.

Many are the books written about Guruvayoor temple and about the presiding deity, Lord Krishna, also called Narayana,

Vasudeva, Guruvayoorappan etc. Miracles in this temple town happen everyday. Incurable diseases getting cured is very common. It is so common that people don't call it miracle. They say, "It is His Leela; His play; His pas-time, His infinite mercy and grace".

Drinking *theertha* everyday I became all right.

Peace and joy at Anandashram

"Swami Ramdas is one of the rarest flowers of representative Indian spirituality. His life is a practical demonstration of the scriptural description about the blissful, carefree and unconcerned activity of a *jivan mukta*." Swami Sivananda, the great saint speaks so high of Swami Ramdas who is the founder of Anandashram in Kanhangad, North Kerala.

Anandashram is rightly named because one finds peace, quietness and bliss. Any spiritual seeker or pilgrim can feel the vibration of that joy in a very short time of his/her stay in the ashram.

Sadguru Swami Satchidananda looks after the physical and spiritual well-being of the seekers and devotees. His book 'Mundane to Spiritual' is a proof of that great care and concern for men. His advices on many problems of the devotees are systematically arranged in that book. It is a precious reference book for

all men and women to alleviate their sufferings.

We experienced that Anandashram is our real home and Swami Satchidanandaji is our Saviour *Sadguru*. We also experienced that Papa (Swami Ramdas) and Mathaji (Pujya Krishnabhai) are our divine Parents.

Om Sri Ram – Jai Ram – Jai Jai Ram.

Jai Gurudev ! Jai Gurudev ! Jai Gurudev !

Nag goes to Sabarimala

"Come to me with your head-loads of problems, worries and tension, I shall lighten you and cheer you up," says Lord Ayyappa.

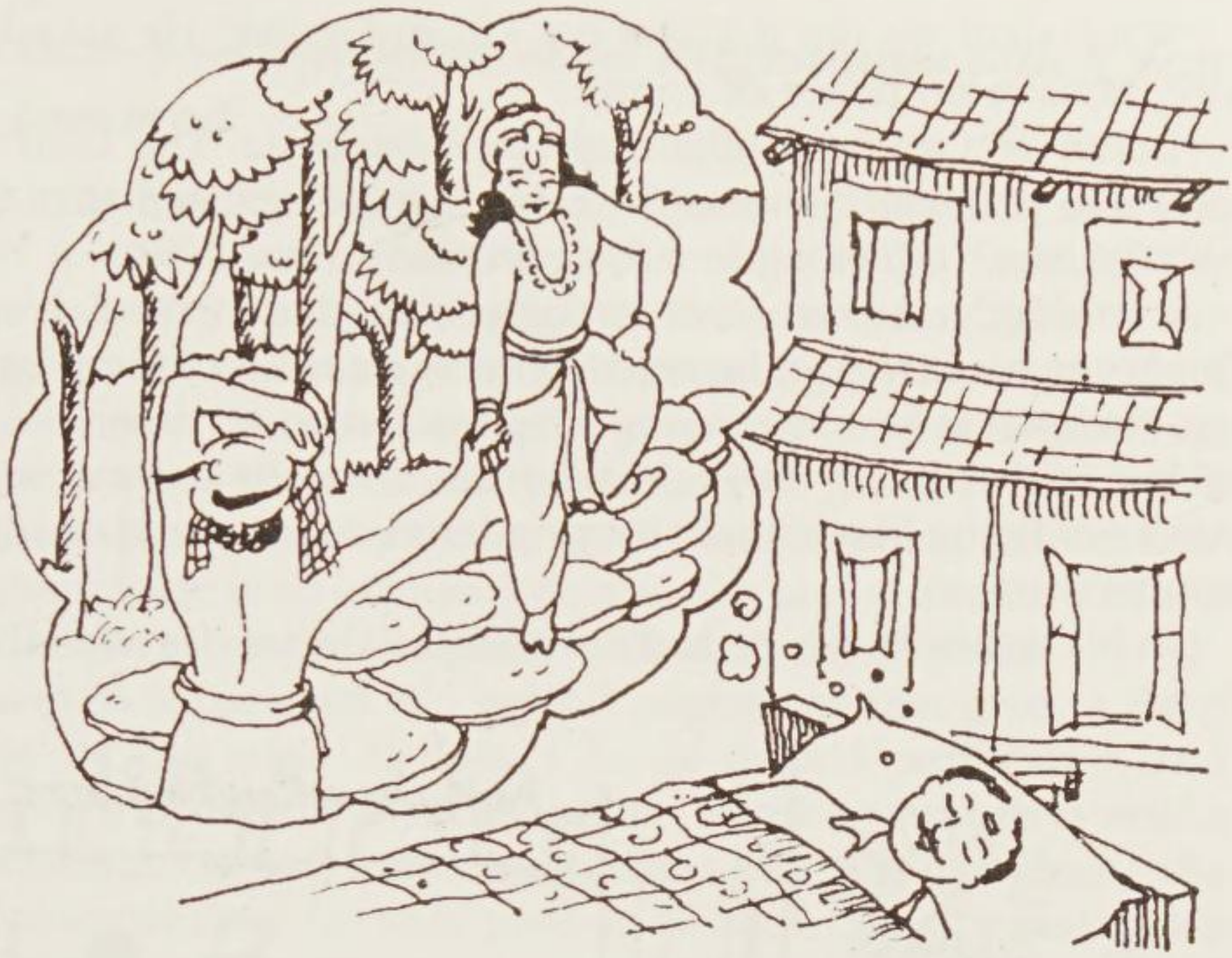
Nag is a Nepali watchman of Ayyappa temple at Mahalingapuram in Chennai. He was seeing the daily *pujas* and large number of Ayyappa devotees in black dress, going to Sabarimala. Their journey starts from the temple with *Kettu* – which is a head-load of offerings to the Lord of Sabarimala. Coconuts, ghee, rice and *puja* items would be the contents. Devotees carry them after a ritual in the temple with constant chanting of the *Mantra* "*Swamiye Saranam, Ayyappa*" These are performed under guidance of a Guru-Swamy. (*Swami Saranam* means Lord is our refuge/ protection) "Lord, Thou art our only protection"– This is the spirit of the *Mantra*/ call.

Along with offerings of worship, their head loads carry their sufferings too.

All these rituals and constant hearing of Lord's name, and devotional songs, fired a keen desire in Nag that he should also make a pilgrimage to Sabarimala. He was not able to make it so long, due to his low salary. The trip costs a minimum of Rs. 1000 and it was quite a big sum for him.

"Who would give me such a big amount, except the Lord Himself?" he wondered.

During one season, he had a pleasant and inspiring dream that Ayyappa Himself had come to him. He was leading Nag through a forest to Sabarimala. This encouraged Nag to decide to go, money or no money. He took up the necessary preparation — certain ritualistic observances, such as wearing a *rudrakshamala* or *thulasimala*, black dhothi etc. He had a belief that everything will be taken care of by Lord Himself and he need not worry himself.



He Dreamt, Ayyappa leading him through the forest

Just a week before the D-date an old lady came to the temple-counter and gave a fairly big amount stating that she was not able to go to Sabarimala during that season and so decided to donate to any needy person who wanted to go to Sabarimala.

The clerk at the counter remembered Nag. He was called in and the lady offered the full amount to him.

Nag was full of ecstasy. His joy knew no bounds. He profusely thanked Lord Ayyappa and the lady with tears that he could not control himself.

He believes that Ayyappa only came to him in the guise of that lady – the same One who came to him in his dream.

"The Lord came to my house"

Three army officers took over the management of an industrial unit. They were on a war with the old managerial personnel. So they terminated the services of four managers as a first step and let out a war cry: "Many more heads are going to be rolled down shortly".

Anand was one who did not want to see his head rolling down the streets. He became nervous and frightful. He didn't know what to do.

"What shall we do, if I lose my job suddenly?" He asked his wife. "I have no peace of mind".

"Better you go on a pilgrimage to Sabarimala. The Lord will solve the problem," she said. (Later, Anand realized that God initiated him to His kingdom through his Guru-wife)

Accordingly, Anand went to Sabarimala and prayed deeply. This being his first visit, he enjoyed every moment of the pilgrimage. He felt that he was carrying a big burden on his ascend to the hill but while coming down, he felt feather-weight and a new joy. "Am I not flying like a bird?" he wondered. All his head–loads of worries were off.

On his return home, he had a wonderful dream. He says about it:

But on Seeing Lord Ayyappa, they ran away

"The Lord came to my house. He was sitting in His usual posture in front of the house. Three ruffians who were chasing me with their axes, somewhere on a road, entered the garden of my house, closely following me. But on seeing Ayyappa, they simply retraced their steps and ran away. Within the next six months, all the three army officers vacated the company, leaving the employees like myself peaceful and secure."

Wonderful are His ways!

Practice–5—*How to go on a Pilgrimage when you are Jammed*

Sometimes, you are bogged down by problems and feel as if you are in a traffic jam. You are neither able to go forward nor backward. No help from any source is forthcoming. That is the time to go on a pilgrimage. A healthy young person may desire God's help in his ventures; an old couple may want spiritual enlightenment. However, all pilgrims look forward to achieve specific requirements by this educative and inspiring exploration. Yes; pilgrimage is an exploration, mentally and spiritually and the world tends to be the kingdom of God, to the pilgrims.

A trip to Sabarimala is a typical pilgrimage that gives a deep impact on the mind. It does a lot of mental purification and therefore it is unique. The pilgrim has to observe 40 days *vritha* (self-restraint) before embarking on his trip. It is like tuning the mind towards God. He must give-up alcohol, cigarette, meat, fish etc and observe strict *brahmacharya* (celibacy). Only *'satvik'* food which is light and easy to digest should be consumed. This type of food increases spiritual strength. Every morning, a pilgrim starts his purification by way of bathing in a river or tank, with a group of other pilgrims. Singing bhajan songs in a group and remembering Lord's name and consi-dering every person as the Lord Himself, purify his mind. A group of pilgrims under the leadership of a Guru Swami visits many temples and pray, "*Swamiye Saranam Ayyappa*" which means 'I surrender to you, my lord'. This attitude of self-surrender is the most important feature of the pilgrimage. He should lead a life of righteousness and truth. Forty days of strict discipline is only a beginning. This discipline should continue throughout his life.

Thus, the pilgrimage is a learning process of self-surrender and perceiving everyone as God (Ayyappa). Finally the pilgrim should achieve his goal of self-realization, may-be after many such trips on pilgrimage. The writing on the temple 'TAT- TVAM-ASI'/ 'You are THAT' is to be achieved in this very life. This great saying (*mahavakya*) is from the Chandogya Upanishad, in the Sama Veda. It declares that you (the purified Self) are *Brahman*, the Universal Consciousness, God.

PART II

MANAGING MEN BY INSPIRATION

MANAGING MEN BY INSPIRATION

In the ultimate analysis, all management is man-management and all man-management is self-management.

—SHARU RENGNEKAR
Management Consultant, Bombay

A Story from 'Mahabharata'

Sri Krishna woke up from his brief after-noon nap and saw near his feet, Arjuna the Pandava prince standing with folded hands, doing pranam (salutation) with utmost reverence. Krishna smiled at him and asked him to be seated.

"I am also here, waiting to see you," said a voice from the head-side of his bed. Turning his head, he saw Duryodhana the proud Kourava prince, seated majestically on a throne.

Both of them came to ask for Krishna's help for their war – and they both received what they wanted. Duryodhana received Krishna's entire army whereas Arjuna got Krishna Himself.

Finally, who won the war? The pride had its fall and the humility won a marvellous victory.

Wherever there is humility, there is God.

Whosoever gets divinity, Wins all the battles.

Arjuna, the Pandava army-chief, sets a good example for 'self-management'.

CHAPTER 7

PADA DHYAN FOR INSTANT INSPIRATION

Jesus at the Home of Simon, the Pharisee

A Pharisee invited Jesus to have dinner with him, and Jesus went to his house and sat down to eat. In that town was a woman who lived a sinful life. She heard that Jesus was eating in the Pharisee's house, so she brought an alabaster jar full of perfume and stood near Jesus, by his feet, crying and wetting his feet with her tears. Then she dried his feet with her hair, kissing them and pouring the perfume on them.

When the Pharisee saw this, he said to himself, "If this man really were a prophet, he would know who this woman is, who is touching him; he would know what a sinful life she lives!"

Jesus spoke up and said to him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

"Yes, Teacher," he said, "tell me".

"There were two men who owed money to a money lender," Jesus began. "One owed him five hundred silver coins, and the other owed him fifty: Neither of them could pay him back, so he cancelled the debts of both. Which one of them, will love him more?"

"I suppose" answered Simon, "that it would be the one who was forgiven more."

"You are right," said Jesus. Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your home, and you gave me no water for my feet, but she has washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You did not welcome me with a kiss but she has not stopped kissing my feet since I came. You provided no olive oil for my head but she has covered my feet with perfume. I tell you, then, the great love she has shown proves that her many sins have been forgiven. But whoever has been forgiven little shows only a little love."

Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven."

The others sitting at the table began to say to themselves "who is this, who even forgives sins?''

But Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace.''

(LUKE 7.36)

From 'THE GOOD NEWS BIBLE'.

What is pada dhyan?

Pada-Dhyan is remembrance of God, by meditating on His Lotus Feet. *Padukadhyan* is a similar practice with one difference – the shoes or sandals of the Guru/God are worshipped. Both give instant inspiration.

We met Mr. Drelik, a football coach in Bruno, a big city in Czechoslovakia. He worked in a factory and we became friends. One day, he took us to his club-house. Strangely, we noticed a pair of sport-shoes, hanging from the roof, at the centre of a hall! The football players go one by one and reverentially place the pair of shoes on their heads. They appeared to derive inspiration and blessings of their Guru, Mr. Drelik as if through an electric impulse. Negativity disappear and they become positive–a sort of spiritual charging.

A sort of Spiritual Charging

How to free oneself from one's Thorny Ego

Bharata kept the holy *paduka* (wooden footwear) of his brother, Sri Rama, on the throne and worshipped the Holy Feet of Rama with the *sankalpa* that Rama is the King ruling Ayodhya and not he. He considered himself as a servant of Sri Rama. So Bharata also wore saffron cloth and grew matted hair like Sri Rama in exile. Placing Rama's *paduka* on his head instead of his crown was a great joy for him. How great was his love for his brother, Sri Rama!

Every human being can take this as a model. Whatever may be his position, he will enjoy life, if he serves the Holy Feet of God/ Guru. He must consider himself as a servant of God, doing His work. If he can do the work, in the name of God, maintaining a close relation with God like the three brothers of Rama or Hanuman, a man can be always happy and peaceful.

The attitude is the most important thing. The Maharaja of Travancore ruled his kingdom as a servant of Lord Padmanabha. Thus relinquishing his kingdom and position was made comparatively easy for him by the right attitude "Lord wants it that way. So accept with pleasure all that is inevitable as His *prasada* (blessing)."

Self-Surrender and the relation between man and god

Our darling grandchildren,

Surrender to God is the highest spiritual achievement. This means that he has no more ego; all ego is wiped out and his heart is pure.

This idea is brought out in the following equation:

MAN - EGO = GOD - (1) (Minus sign shows that ego is taken out).

The derivative of this formula is:

MAN + SELF SURRENDER = GOD - (2)

Self-surrender is acceptance of whatever happens, with joy and considering that one's body, mind and intellect are His instruments and God is the Player. His will only prevails— "I am not the doer; He is the Doer.''

A nation at the feet of the lord wins freedom— the Czechoslovakian experience

"Our big brother betrayed us." This is how Mr. Schubert, our Czech friend, reacted to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August

1968. "The Russians don't respect their agreement with us,'' he said.

Our host, Mrs. Linkov wept. With a broken-heart, she said, "Gone, everything is lost. Our children and even our grand-children will not see freedom. We, Czechs are born to be slaves forever.''

Under the Soviet regime, Czechs thought that they would never get freedom and democracy.

Just a week ago, the Russian soldiers were waving their hands, bidding 'good-bye' to Czechs while their tanks rolled away to the border. The treaty of Bratislavia gave Czechoslovakia an independent status without any Russian interference.

Czechs shouted, "Go back, quick. We don't want to see you any-more.'' Russian army withdrew its armed forces at the rate of forty kilometers per day and, within a week, the entire country was devoid of foreign soldiers.

Czechs celebrated what turned-out to be an illusory freedom. We saw men and women singing and dancing in the streets. Joy flowed like wine and wine flowed like water. The people went to bed very late.

That same night, the Russian army came back to their old posts. The Soviet air force transported its soldiers, machine guns and armoured tanks like magic. Czechs woke-up to find their old enemies back again, ready to shoot at them. Wherever confrontation broke out many died, but the country's administration changed overnight without too much bloodshed.

This Soviet aggression was similar to the Greek invasion of the Trojans. The giant wooden horse which they left-behind was packed with soldiers who came out in the night and captured the city.

There was total confusion; communication was paralysed. The underground Czech TV went on telling that their country was under Russian occupation and youths were still fighting the invading army. The youths were mobilising to counter the army but they proved too fragile and weak as the attack was too sudden.

Strangely, church bells rang that evening. People were generally afraid to go to church for fear of the communists but that day, they turned-out fearless. A big crowd rushed to the church as if to find asylum in communing with God; to tell Him all their pathetic woes and distress. Many could not find space inside. They waited

outside. The whole nation was at the Feet of God.

After the service, the young priest said: "God is seeing this terrible aggression. He is our Father. He knows our woes and pains. He will heal us and take us to freedom." We wondered how such a young person could console thousands of grief stricken people.

Many leaders were locked up in prison. What followed was a long struggle for freedom. Their leader and prime minister Mr. Dubchek was sent to Siberia to work as a black smith, his profession before becoming prime-minister. Many others were punished and tortured.

New leaders came and took their place among the people. They inspired and led them through a revolution that ultimately brought them freedom and democracy.

God works through new leaders when old ones go away. This applies in religion, politics and in all fields. Is he not our ever inspiring, evergreen Leader of leaders?

Now, in Czechoslovakia, there is religious freedom. Anyone can go to church, sit at the Lotus Feet of the Lord and commune with Him freely and frankly. God answered their prayers.

"Our Father in Heaven, may Your Name be honoured; may Your Kingdom come."

I lost my universality

1. As a baby, I was one with the universe. I was the sun, the moon and the stars. I had no worries and tensions; in fact, no thoughts, whatsoever. I remember plenty of fire-flies in the house, twinkling like stars. I made no differentiation between them and the stars. I was pure awareness - my Real Self. Every thing was a joy, real joy.

Refer Fig. 1

Fig. 1

2. When I was sent to school, I shrunk within the four walls of the class-room. I rebelled. I developed three faces – ego, emotion and intellect. Occasionally, I worried over my plight. I became angry and mischievous. I was fearful. I became very selfish, always fighting with others.

Refer Fig. 2

Fig. 2

3. But moments of happiness were also there especially when I got high marks and appreciation. As the years passed on, I discovered for myself that I have a fourth face – that I am a four-sided personality. The fourth is common sense (awareness). It was weaker than what I wanted it to be, the reason being that the other three crippled my awareness too much. Therefore I misunderstood everything of this world. The result: either ego, emotion or logic dominated my personality, more than awareness.

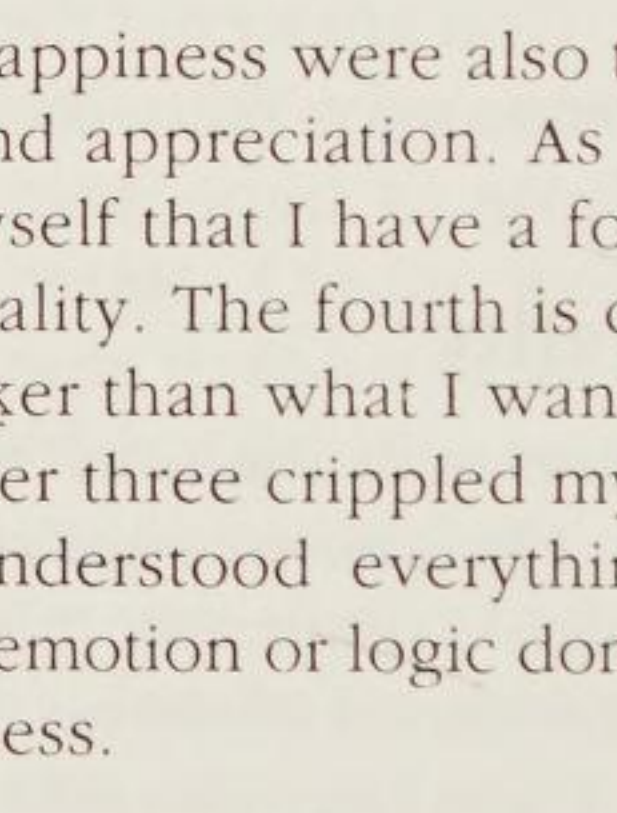


Fig. 3

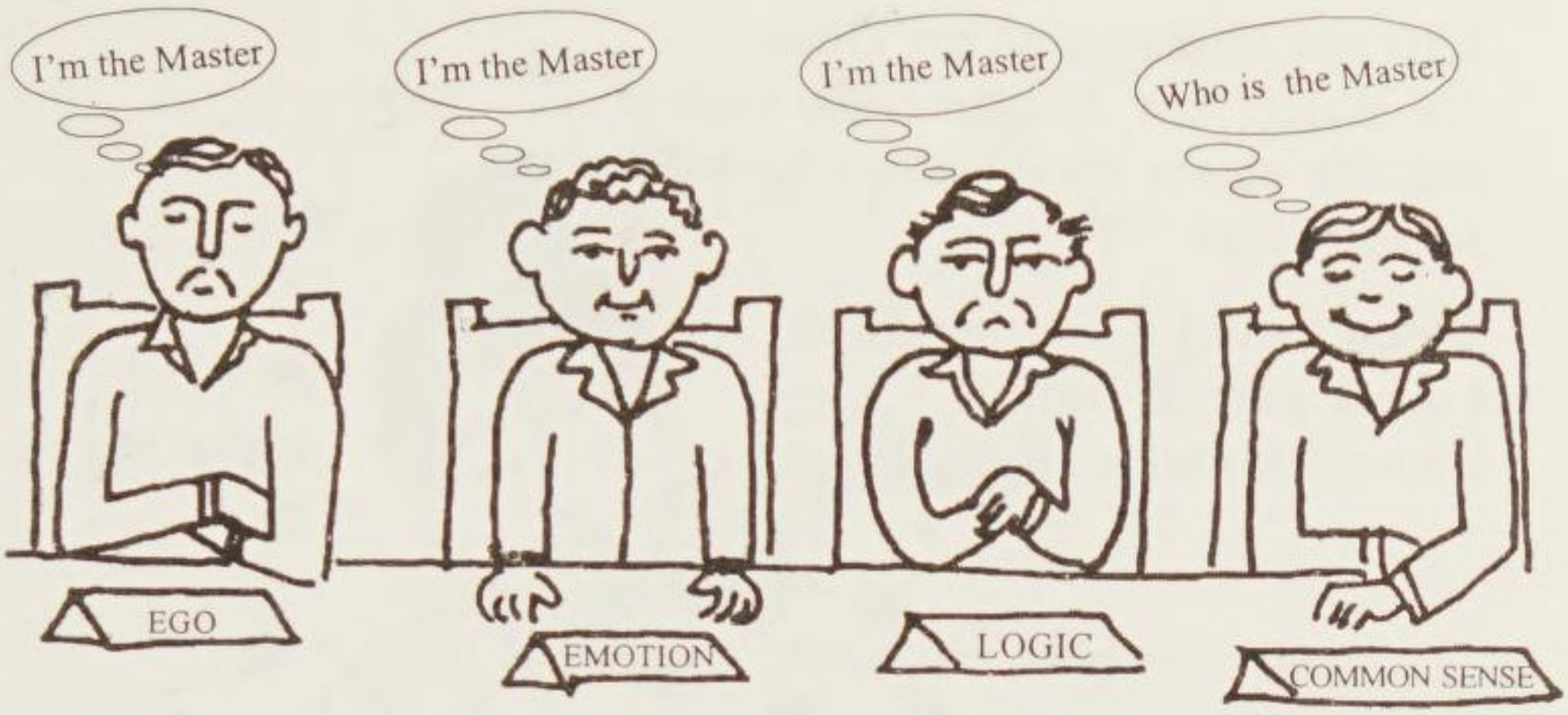


Fig. 4

Refer Figs. 3&4

I, the awareness, became the prisoner of the other three – the unreal self, dominated the Real Self - the *asuras* won over *devas* (the demons won the demi-gods).

The Regaining of my real Self

Hanuman shows us the way of emancipation and Self realisation. He is considered as *Jagadguru*, the world-teacher. He is himself a monkey-man, turned to God-Man. His example will suit us as we have a wavering monkey - like nature. Hanuman says:

"When I think I am the body,
I am a servant of God, doing
God's work. *Refer Fig. 5.*

Fig. 5 Pada-Grahana

I accept Sri Rama as my Guru,
my Master, my All. He takes care of
me. My ego is sliced down by him to the
smallest size.

When I think I am the mind,
I am a part of Him.
I love Him with all my Heart. *Refer Fig. 6.*

Fig. 6 Bliss

He is my beloved Sri Rama.
My mind and intellect get purified
and transcend emotion
and logic. Pure, unselfish love springs
up as a fountain in my heart.

When I think I am the Atman (the Spirit)
He and I are one. I merge with Him.
He hugs me. I am in such ecstasy
That I become
SAT-CHIT-ANANDA - that is,
RAMA HIMSELF.
I become universal – back again to
Universality/Divinity/my Real Self. '' *Refer Fig. 7.*

Fig. 7 Oneness with God

How to get an idol to worship the lord

" The most enjoyable thing is to take a bath in Thungabhadra river and pray at Mantralaya,'' an old man told Anand while bathing in the river. Next he asked:

"Where do you come from?''

Anand replied and they got into a brief conversation.

The old man revealed his name as Raghavendra, a regular pilgrim to Mantralayam. He showed Anand a four inches square red-stone-slab, that he got from the river. Clearly and vividly inscribed on it were two beautiful feet – almost as if carved by an artist. Closer observa-tion revealed it to be a natural formation.

He used to pray: "Swamiji, I want an idol from you to do puja. Please give me one." With that prayer, he dipped himself into the river for several days. One day he got the stone from the river bed. From then onwards, he was doing puja to this image of the Holy Feet. He is more happy and nearer to Swamiji, during worship of the Holy Feet.

One night, he had a dream that Swamiji appeared to him and asked him to do a devotional service. The work assigned to him

was inscribing mantra "*OM SRI GURU RAGHAVENDRAYANAMAH*" on brass sheets and selling them to devotees at cost price. He wrote several thousand *mantras*. The glorious Name and message of Swamiji was spread far and wide. He was enjoying his life and told Anand that he felt indescribable fulfillment by such a service.

Thus, living in the presence of Swamiji, worshiping His feet and doing the suggested service, the old man, who has no body else in this world, became ever-happy and peaceful. How wonderful are the ways of God!

Practice–6—*How to surrender ego and enjoy bliss Padadhyan*

"I am in all beings; every being is in Me," says Lord Krishna in the 18th Chapter of the Bhagavad–Gita.

The *sankalpa* (resolve) that God is standing before us while saying our prayers is most important. God is real and He is everywhere. Our *sankalpa* that God is present before us is therefore, real. It is not mere imagination of a non-existing identity. If our imagination is of an existing identity it is called "Sankalpa''. We may sing "Sriman Narayana, Sriman Narayana, Sriman Narayana, Sri *Padame Saranam*'' or "*Swamiye Saranam*'' or "You are my only refuge, my Lord, I surrender to your Lotus Feet" – or whatever mantra or prayer that resonates in our heart.

After saying the prayer with full heart, we should bow down to God and touch His feet. Since God is real, His feet are also real. Touch-ing His feet will give us immense happiness and peace of mind. Much depends upon our *sankalpa* and faith in God. If we doubt the reality of God, then the result will not be forthcoming. On the other hand, when we believe completely that God is standing before us, the prayer is a joyful and thrilling experience, even though He is invisible to us.

This experience of joy strengthens our faith in God and we believe that God is always with us. We live in His presence. He is ever with us. Our self-confidence, mental strength and capacity to face difficulties grow tremendously.

Small children say prayer with the confidence that God is standing before them and that they are touching His Holy Feet. Thereafter, for a few minutes, they are very joyful and silent. Adults take more time to strengthen their faith/sankalpa and get benefits.

Thus, parents have to take the initiative and encourage children to pray after their play. In the morning and evening, we should pray along with our children. Joint prayer brings greater harmony in the family and miracles can take place as cosmic energy purifies our mind and fills us with joy.

Touching God's feet, we feel "*sparsana*" – the Divine touch, in our palms. We feel exhilaration. If you like, use a pillow or cushion for His Feet. The best way is to imagine that God is sitting on a throne before you and placing his Feet on your lap.

You will experience a thrill of joy running up from your palms to your hands; and then from your hands to your heart.

You may sit comfortably in any posture or you can sit in one of the following yogasanas:

1. *Vajrasana* — for sitting and experiencing the feel of the Divine touch
2. *Vajra—shashankasana* — for bowing down before the Lord, and touching His Feet.
   (These two postures are similar to the Muslims' way of doing prayer).

However the *asanas* are to be learnt from a yoga teacher.

The two asanas give the following benefits:

— Tones up the adrenal gland–
— Conquers anger
— Removes sexual disorders
— Bestows joy/ecstasy.
— Normalizes breathing (excellent for asthma)
— Brings peace (relief from tensions)

CHAPTER 8

MANAGING MEN BY INSPIRATION

How to manage men by inspiration

In an ashram, cleanliness is godliness. During one of his daily rounds, Swamiji found that one place was not clean. Swamiji asked Shanthi, the person concerned, why she didn't clean this particular area? She answered with respect:, "Swamiji, the other lady (she mentioned her name) didn't turn-up for work today!"

Swamiji replied: "Yes ! If this is so, then both of you should not come for work from tomorrow onwards."

Within the next two hours, Shanthi cleaned the entire place herself. Later, Swamiji called them both and advised that work is undivided in ashram.

Thus, in one stroke he broke the 'Tailor's principle of division of work' which is one of the major causes of all conflicts and chaos between management and workers.

Swamiji spoke just one dispassionate sentence and it produced wonderful result. There was no charge sheet asking for an explanation, suspension, sacking etc. There was no court of enquiry, interference of the union—nothing of that sort ever in the history of ashram. The ashram employs 60 workers including dairy farmers, cooks, supervisors, computer programmers and what-not? No strike, no lock-out and no Labour Commissioner – arbitration.

This is called 'Management by inspiration.' Swamiji didn't want to sack anybody when he told Shanthi that both of them need not come to work; but he meant business. He is a man of love and compassion and also a great disciplinarian.

In Japan, managers are trained in Buddhist ashrams. This could be one of the reasons why Japanese management is so good. Books on Japanese management by several authors, both Japanese and Americans, show clearly the fact their management is powered by inspiration.

How to Inspire self and others

We all know that money motivates men to work more and also know its limitations. It may be a promotion, an increment, a perk or a shift to higher status/position in the organization. These rewards help us in the short-run; but they are also short-lived; hence are short-term arrangement. Withdraw the motivation; immediately men are demotivated. This is the case everywhere.

Great men like Gandhiji did not look for somebody to motivate them. They were motivated from within. This is to say, great men are self-inspired. Conversely self-inspired men are great.

Now let us come to inspiration. Inspiration is something which endures for a long time by itself. It is an internal factor, coming from within, coming from the soul.

1. *How to inspire and be inspired?*

The feeling that I am not alone but someone else is with me, is a great inspiring force. Inspiration cannot do the trick if there are discouraging forces. With somebody encouraging, you become double. With somebody discouraging, you become a zero. The man is the same. Only the situations are different. So inspiration is a mental state where you feel doubly strong and trebly strong; infact, you become several-fold strong.

That someone, who is inspiring you, need not be living. He can be a Buddha or a Christ; he can be a Rama or a Krishna. He can be your wife, father, mother or Guru. He can be anybody, even a maid-servant, as in the case of Gandhiji. In his autobiography—"My Experiments with Truth," Gandhiji mentions his maid-servant Rambha, who taught him, when he was young, to chant *Ram Nam* to overcome fear. As a boy he was timid, but soon he became fearless even to face bullets. He became another Rama.

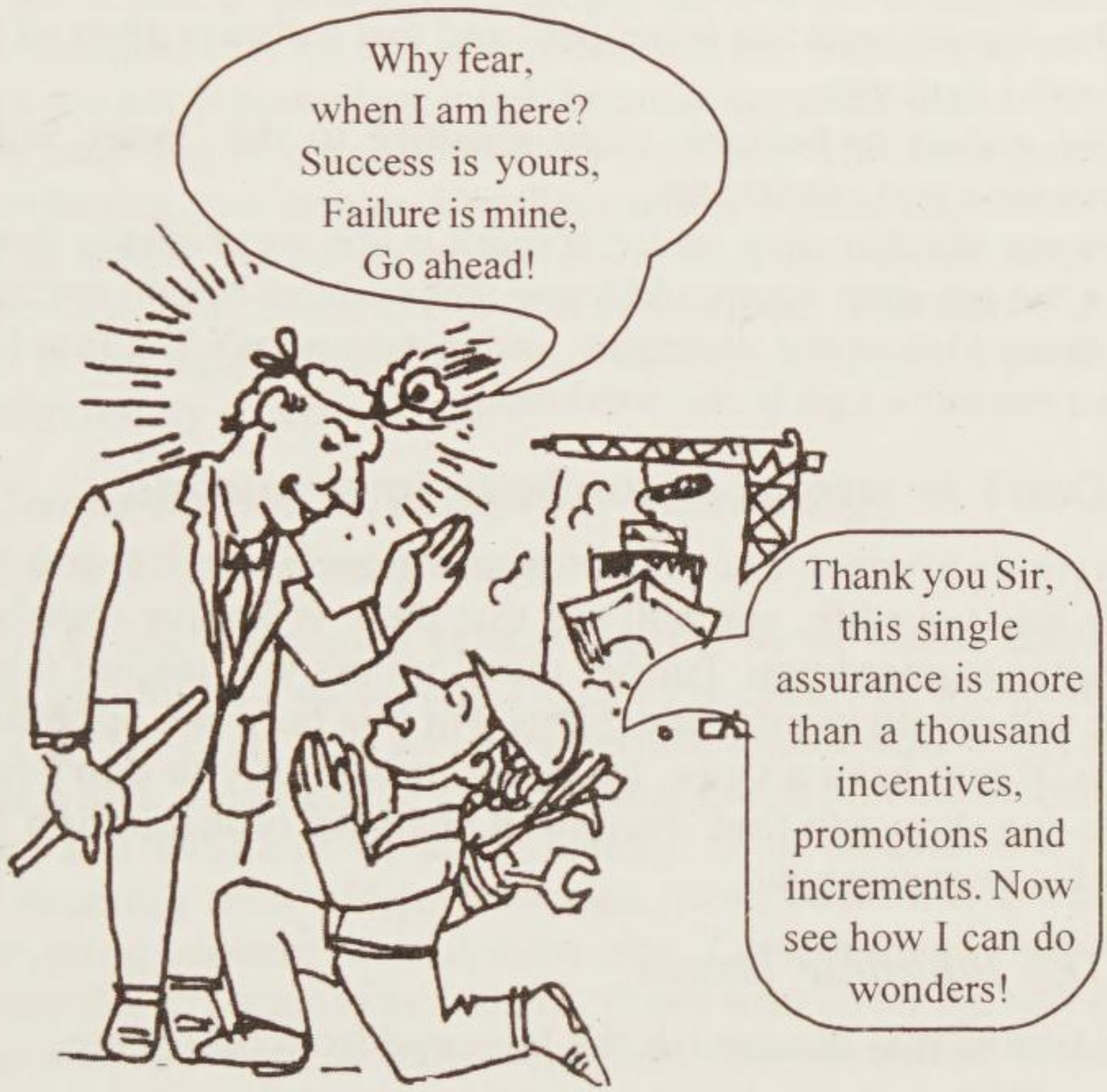
I spent a long time on a particular job. One-day, my General Manager called me and said that he would shift me to a different department where production was low. My job was to double the production. His plan was very high. It was an impossible task, unless some miracle took place. I was shivering in my boots. My General Manager assured me:, "Failure is mine, success is yours."

"Go ahead fearlessly."

"I know, you can do it." He encouraged me. And because of the confidence that he had instilled in me, I was also very much inspired.

This is the kind of inspiration, I received. I went to the people under my charge and told them the same thing. In other words, I transferred the inspiration. Eventually, we did indeed double the annual production. The inspiration worked as a chain-reaction.

The single sentence, "SUCCESS IS YOURS; FAILURE IS MINE," which my G.M. really meant, was the kind of motivation which inspired us to achieve this near-impossible task.



Another example: A company was running continuously on losses. They couldn't get orders. The men were dispirited and felt as if their company was sinking.

A new General Manager was employed and the direction changed.

Sickness starts in the mind and percolates to the body. Inspiration is often the cause of 'miraculous' healing. All of us are ordinary people, but we all can do extraordinary things when we

are inspired. One should know how to inspire oneself as well as others.

2. *Consult the conscience*

(Inner-Self)

We should look inward; never forget that God is within us. Mahatma Gandhi was always inspired by the Inner-Self. "Let me consult my inner voice. It will tell me the solution," he used to say.

One should trust 'the Inner-Self' and that it always gives us true and valid guidance.

The means to become more sensitive to the 'Inner Self' is *nama japa* and meditation.

Swami Vivekananda said: "Strength is life, weakness is death." Since we are alive, we should know that we have certain strengths. We should know our 'strengths' and 'weaknesses'. The Inner-Self is our strength; ego is our weakness.

3. *Don't be afraid of anybody in this world*

Everybody is equal. Become more and more 'aware'. If you look back into your life, you will see that there is always somebody who has inspired you. Further more, unless you inspire others, they will not do worthwhile things. For this purpose, approach a Guru. If you have a Guru, be closer to Him. If you don't have, seek one. You will find. Periodical charging of inspiration by a Guru is very essential.

4. *The Japanese lesson*

The factors that distinguish the Japanese from others are:

—Their consideration for others is superb.

—They always deliberately forget the past and remain with the present. When the past is forgotten, half the battle is won.

—They believe in collective wisdom; through the consensus of the team, they arrive at wise decisions.

—They believe in the glory of team-work i.e they don't care for individual glory.

—They inspire the team and this is why they are superior to others in management.

—In a team, what is important is that it should be inspired by the leader as well as by the members of the team. If we accept this, our team spirit will also be superior. Building team spirit is a collective effort.

5. *Be a giver – Giving is joy*

We can put it in a different way. Imagine a weighing scale where one end is 'taking' and the other end is 'giving'. Everyone of us has got a taking *nature* and a giving *spirit*. If the taking-nature is a predominant factor in a person, he will not inspire others. Most of us are not contributing much because we think that we do not have anything to contribute. Only a person who feels happy in contributing, can inspire. Unselfish action is more important than selfish action. No doubt, a pat on the back and appreciation are important. If it comes OK; if it doesn't come, then also it is OK. This is the right attitude. But our work should go on perfectly, unaffected by external factors.

6. *Sama-darshan (accepting all equally) –The highest management*

There is one interesting episode in the life of Meher Baba. He went to address a gathering. There were cheers of welcome and jeers of "Go-back". His secretary became emotionally upset at the jeers which drowned the cheers. Baba asked him not to become upset and told him: "We are unmindful of the slogans. It is I who am shouting these slogans through these boys. It is I who do everything because there is none else. *I am in them. I am they.* I enjoy them. I want to hear them. Those who cheer me and those who jeer at me are equally important. The ignorance of one is pleasure, that of the other is amusing. I am happy. They are shouting because they remember me. They are all innocent. I am really enjoying."

A truly great person talks through the Spirit and so inspires all. Eventually, even those who jeered at him, came and accepted him as their master.

Meher Baba faced this difficult situation and yet he enjoyed with equanimity. Let us all try to do the same thing. This knowledge that "I am in you, I am you!" inspires. That is the greatest joy and inspiration that one can have, the joy of Self-realisation.

Conclusion

To sum up, financial motivation is something short-living. Inspiration is something which lasts a long time and comes from within. Inspiration is *NISHKAMA KARMA* – doing work without expecting rewards. In *SAKAMA KARMA*, if the reward is stopped, the work comes to a grinding-halt. A simple gesture, even the winking of the eye, can inspire. Motivation is ego-centred. Inspiration, on the other hand, comes from the spirit. In fact, inspiration comes from God directly.

Though you may not know your Neighbour, save him

Apparao, a semi-skilled worker of Telco, Jamshedpur, sat for his lunch in a corner of the factory-floor. Along with his friends, he was about to start eating. Then he suddenly remembered having seen a cleaner, going into an underground-drainage pipe an hour ago, but nobody had come out. The manhole was about fifty feet away on the road, outside the factory building.

Apparao was not personally involved with the underground-drainage and its cleaning-system. His work was different. He also didn't know who the cleaner was, but presumed that he had gone in for cleaning. A thought arose in his mind about his safety.

Apparao told his friends:

"I will go and see, what has happened to that fellow, who went inside the drainage pipe. I haven't seen him coming out ". The man- hole was about 10 feet deep. Peeping into the manhole, he saw somebody lying unconscious. Apparao went inside and, with much difficulty, carried him out. With medical aid given in the hospital, the scavenger came back to life. Apparently, there was gas accumulation in the pipeline, which had knocked him out.

Apparao saved the life of a person. More than the award of appreciation which he received from Telco management, he was happy that he had saved a human life. In turn, he had saved a wife and small kids from lifelong grief and misery.

His love for his fellow-humans inspired him to perform, such an act of kindness and compassion. His love made him aware and alert. This saved the cleaner's life.

He inspired other persons to act bravely including his bosses.

How to manage by inspiration

Murthy was in the top echelon of management cadre at a very young age. Hardly forty-two, he was General Manager of a large public sector undertaking in Hyderabad.

Both Murthy and his wife daily worshipped God. Therefore they considered their good fortune as *prasad* (blessing) given by Swami Ranganatha. Swami had chosen Murthy for this highly responsible post; so he accepted the post as a 'servant of God'. He prayed as follows:

"Lord, you have given me such a highly responsible post. Kindly bear the load and relieve me of the pains. I am too small; I am always at your feet. Where else can I be?"

Though Murthy deserved the position, many of his colleagues who had worked with him in earlier days considered it too big for him. Some of them, who had been senior in rank, now became juniors to him. They became restless and openly disobeyed him. This disturbed the team-spirit and morale at higher levels of management. In turn, it started affecting the productivity at lower levels.

His spiritual practices consisted of daily prayers and meditation. One morning, Murthy had darshan of Raghavendra Swamy. Swamiji is Prahlada, Narasimha, Ranganatha, Pandu Ranga Vittala, Venkateswara, Sri Rama and all those forms of God, in one. Swamiji inspired Murthy to such an extent that the spiritual vibration and inspiration created a tremendous influence in his mind. His body perspired with spiritual energy in the form of heat. The vision was real that Murthy became dumb founded for a long time.

Swamiji gave a message: "I demand of you one service. A devotee of mine, a German national, is coming to see me. He doesn't know Mantralayam. Arrange to send him to me by car".

After giving this message, Swamiji disappeared.

Exactly as told, things happened. A German national, a spiritual aspirant who had been seeing Swamiji in several dreams and visions, came to India. He had no idea who this Swamiji was and where exactly, he should go to meet Him. Swamiji told the German in a later dream, to contact Murthy of Hyderabad and gave him Murthy's identity.

After the vision, Murthy had a telephone call from Delhi, from this German devotee. The devotee wanted to know, whether he could come to meet Murthy in Hyderabad. After getting Murthy's

consent, the devotee came to Murthy's house, the next morning.

Murthy arranged a car for travel to Manthralayam. Later, Murthy also went to Mantralayam and spent some days there with Swamiji. Both were warmly received with decorations and honour by the priests and administrators of the temple.

After his visit to Manthralyam, Murthy found that the work–climate changed drastically. The management-employee relation improved in his factory. The output steadily increased. The atmosphere became charged with positive vibrations .

Blessed are those who turn to Him, for they will be helped.

The beauty remains; but the pain passes

'Dedicated work' is a medicine that prolonged Rajan's life. Doctors at Vellore wondered how he has eventually lived for eleven years, though their estimate had been only two years. He was a 'written-off' case but he did not quit this world, until he made an imprint. He made the best use of his painful life for creative art which, in turn, nurtured him and his family for many more years than scheduled by destiny. Though he was handicapped due to cancer and his thigh bone operated, he still traveled to sell his

"Here is a new painting for you, Sir"

paintings, with the disease spread over the body.

He was a soldier, brave and undefeated, who changed the course of destiny by sheer will-power and dedication. His life was one of courage and determination. He reminds us of the great painter, Auguste Renoir who was painting under tortuous pain, due to arthritis. Once while watching him paint, a friend asked :

"Why do you continue to paint when you are suffering so much?"

Renoir replied: "The beauty remains; but the pain passes."

Rajan appeared before me supporting himself on his crutches with much difficulty and in addition, holding a new painting in one hand. Still, he had his broad smile which never parted him and never indicated his pain.

Mathaji – the model personnel manager

It was midnight on a moonlit night. We were awaken from our sleep by shoutings and door-bangings at our neighbour's house. Looking through our window, I saw a Sardarji, heavily banging our neighbour's door and furiously abusing:

'..... *Kholo darvaza, our bahar ajao*' (Fellows, open the door and come out).

He repeated his demand and his voice resounded throughout the neighbourhood. No one dared to come out. One hand holding his *Kirpan* (sword) and the other continuously banging, he was insistent. The blade of his *Kirpan* was shining in the moonlight. He seemed like a terrorist, ready for his final act:

"*Thum sabko ham khatam Karenge*" (I will finish all of you). He kept repeating the same phrase.

At that time, we were new to Visakhapatnam, living in a busy locality called Dwarakanagar. Our neighbours were the manager of a road transport company, his wife, his mother and two small kids. The front room of his house was his office and the remaining part was residential. His Delhi-based company employed people mainly from Delhi and the Punjab. Two or three trucks of his company were always parked in front of his house and partly in front of our house. The truck drivers were mostly *Sardarjis* (Sikhs).

The people of the neighbourhood pretended to be unaware of the incident. Nobody opened their door and came out in the street, to help them. Everyone was struck with fear. He went on threatening everyone of that family, including the kids.

He was very persistent and he was going round and round the house. Finally he left the place and he was cursing everyone.

Next day, still curious at the previous night's incident, I heard Mathaji's voice in the house. It was around nine in the morning; my husband and children had just left the house and I was alone. Rushing to the window, I was very surprised at what I saw.

The same Sardarji who had made all that terrible scene the previous night was sitting calmly by Mathaji's side. He had come to see the manager. Mathaji was sitting on a *Katiya* (cot) placed in the courtyard and she had offered him a seat by her side on the same *Katiya* !

"Beta, kal thumko Kya hua?

(What happened to you yesterday, my son?)

Mathaji began the conversation in a very friendly manner and they discussed out the previous night's nightmare. I could only hear a few snippets of their conversation such as:

"Both of you are my sons"

'Isme naraj honeka kya bath hai?....Jo hogaya tho ho-gaya. Thumbi voh sub bhool jao....Thum tho bhi mera betayy hai...' etc. etc.

(What is there to be so angry about? Whatever happened, had happened already....you forget all those things....you are also my son.... etc.)

All her words were unbelievably sweet, without the slightest hint of bitterness.

Mathaji talked to Sardarji as if he were her own son. Further more, she talked as if she had forgotten everything of the previous night's drama and nothing remained in her mind. Sardarji was very apologetic. He asked for her forgiveness and touched Mathaji's feet most respectfully. 'That is a wonderful outcome', I thought. Mathaji called her son and told him something. Later on, I came to know that the quarrel was due to disagreement between the manager and the driver on some allowances which the driver claimed and the manager refused to give. Mathaji's magic formula made the two of them shake hands and hug each other. Both of them appeared to compromise on the issue and were pleased with the outcome.

Sardarji left the premises, apologetically bowing down again and again, doing *pranam* to Mathaji and his manager.

May many more in our country, follow Mathaji's example of forgiveness.

When he sought help from God he received it

Anand had a shock when he learnt that his site-engineer had been kidnapped in Barauni (Bihar), in broad daylight. In Bihar, such events are not uncommon. There are many labour problems. Un-employment is a perennial cause of dispute; anger erupts in many different forms like volcanoes. To try to solve the problem, he had to travel immediately a distance of 1150 km. He prayed God and since he had no plan of his own and did not have any skill to deal with kidnappers, he surrendered to God's will.

On reaching the refinery gate, where the incident took place, he found a big statue of Hanumanji carrying Sri Rama and Lakshmana on his shoulders. Anand prayed to Hanumanji to carry him also through this crisis, so that a satisfactory solution could be reached which would be acceptable to both sides. The kidnappers demanded that the company should provide 40 of them with jobs or give them a ransom of Rs. 40,000/- every month until the construction work was over. The work was expected to complete in a year. That means, the ransom was Rs. 5 Lakhs.

Through a mediator, who was very fair to both sides, a settlement was reached. The mediator – a stranger who arrived on the scene unexpectedly – appeared to Anand as a God-sent messen-

ger. They met each other in a tea-shop on the road side, and it struck Anand that here was a man with whom he could confide and solve the problem. Later, Anand even convinced his boss and management, of the faireness of the settlement. "All credit goes to Hanumanji. He carried me through the crisis and did every thing for me," says Anand.

On many occasions, God helps when prayed for. He can stop rain when not required, prevent when it is dangerous. He can prevent failures in lifting-gear systems and thereby save lives. That is why in construction engineering work particularly, where risk and uncertainities are of a very high order, prayer, *puja*, reading of Holy Books etc. are widely practiced among religious persons.

Practice–7—*The secret of success in work*

(Adapted from Swami Vivekananda's book, 'Karma-Yoga')

1. Type of work–"Casual work, quality work, Selfless work (*Nishkama Karma*), work with love, and work as an offering to god."
2. Defect in work -.Swami Vivekananda says:

"Our great defect in life is that we are so much drawn to the ideal (goal/target), the goal is so much enchanting, that we lose sight of the details altogether." In ninety-nine percent of cases of failure, we will find that the failure is due to lack of attention to details. Absence of a few bolts and nuts stop dispatch of a huge machinery to a customer or it may hold up payment of a large sum of money. Finally, all of our efforts can go waste, because we did not attend to a minor detail, which could easily have been done.

Conclusion: Once the goal is set and details worked out, our attitude should be that even minor items should receive our full attention. (Obviously, the major items will receive everybody's attention.) Then, automatically the target will take care of itself and will be achieved one hundred percent.

3. Cause of our failures: We are all attached to 'what we will get out of work'. Salary is paid for attendance. Whether we do anything or not, we must get our promotion (out-of-turn), status (beyond-our-worth) and reputation (all over the world). We are attached to rewards – it is the source of happiness and

social status. If we do not get rewards, we weep and we do not sleep. We may go slow or even strike work. Attachment to rewards brings miseries to ourselves and to others. Relinquishing selfish desires in doing work, *NISHKAMA KARMA* alone brings concentration in work and enduring happiness.

Conclusion: Swami Vivekananda says:

"We are all beggars. Whatever we do, we want a return. We are all traders. We are traders in life, in virtue, in religion and in love also." This attitude of traders is to be changed.

The great secret of true success

Swami Vivekananda says:

"The man who asks for no rewards, the perfect unselfish man, is the most successful. It seems to be a paradox; do we not know that every man who is unselfish in life, gets cheated; gets hurt? Apparently yes. 'Christ was unselfish, and yet he was crucified.' True, but we know that his unselfishness is the reason for and the cause of a great victory – the crowning of millions upon millions of lives with the blessings of true success."

"Ask nothing, want nothing in return. Give what you have to give; it will come back to you – but do not think of that now; it will come back multiplied a thousand fold – but the attention must not be on that. Yet have the power to give; give and there it ends. Learn that the whole of life is giving; the nature will force you to give. So give willingly. The moment you say, "I will not" the blow comes; you are hurt...."

"We get only that for which we are fitted." This is a great truth.

"We are always standing up to set right other people and not ourselves. It is a lie when we say, the world is bad and we are good."

Let us make ourselves perfect – This is where self-management (managing one's own selfish ego) can take place and we can grow in wisdom and joy.

Dharma Yoga

Dharma and *Karma* are similar. However, Dharma has a much profound meaning, and the Hindu religion itself is called, '*Sanathana Dharma.*' Here the word *dharma* means the duties and responsibilities of a person and the prescribed role in life that he or she has to play.

The roles that one has to play are many and different from others. One may play his role as son/brother/husband. Or in office, one may be boss/subordinate. Playing one's role perfectly, brings credibility and purity of mind. In this way, the ego gets wiped out and one is ever at peace and bliss. Ultimately, he is emancipated.

If you don't play your role .....

A traveling drama-troup arrived in a town in Andhra Pradesh and set up their stage for enacting a story from the "Mahabharath". The actors had a habit of drinking alcohol before playing their roles. On the very first day of inauguration, one of the main characters who was to play the role of Sri Krishna, took excess liquor, and therefore he could not play his role. Since nobody else was trained, the drama had to be postponed. The manager came on the stage and announced this decision.

The audience were displeased. Many had come from long distances. They had been waiting for days, to be entertained. So when the manager made his announcement and apologized, the spectators were not ready for excuse. They agitated and demanded that the drama to be staged at any cost.

The actor who had drunk too much, could not even lift his head. After a lot of pursuance, one of the secondary actors, who normally played the role of Sudhama, agreed to play the role of Sri Krishna.

After a long wait, the curtain was lifted. In the very first scene, when Sri Krishna appeared with his slim body and poor appearance, people hooted at the actor and cursed the manager.

The drama had to be cancelled. The audience were so angry that they insisted, that the drama group packed their things and left the town the very next day.

Though not exactly the same, similar things happen in organizations. When someone does not play his role, the organization is severally affected and literally has to close down.

May such a tragedy not happen to your organization, firm or family! May auspicious things only happen to you ! May *Dharma* show you the path! May alcohol be kept away as a killer/villain in life-drama. Play your role in life perfectly to the best of your ability, which is *Dharma*. This is Dharma Yoga which alone can bring peace, happiness and prosperity. *Dharma* is our Protector, our Refuge.

CHAPTER 9

YOGA FOR PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL HEALTH

What is yoga?

Though Yoga is explained in many ways, all the masters say:

"Yoga is universal love and universal service – loving all and serving all."

This is the simplest way of explaining Yoga. Yoga literally means union; union between the *Jeevatma* and *Paramatma*/God. But the *Jeevatma* and *Paramatma* are already united, just as the legs, tail, trunk, tusks, ears etc. are all the parts of one elephant. But, like 'the blind men and the elephant' story, we don't realize the truth. In our ignorance we think that everything in this universe is separate whereas in truth, all things and beings are of the same spirit – the sun, moon, stars, men, women, children, birds, animals – everything. Like electricity, the same spirit is acting differently in infinite forms. A realized person, a Jeevanmukta, like Jesus Christ, tells us. "God and I are one", Swami Ramdas calls everyone 'Ram'. All are the same One for him. Matha Amrithanandamayi hugs everyone, without any preference and addresses everyone as 'my child'. Other Jeevanmuktas address everyone as mother/brother etc. They really mean: "Everyone is God; Everything is God – *Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*."

In the Bhagavad-Gita, Lord Krishna explains Yoga as :

Equanimity (ch.2:48); skill and efficiency in action (ch.2:50); the supreme giver of happiness (ch.5:2); serenity(ch.6:3); destroyer of pain(ch.6:17) etc.

Swami Sivananda defines Yoga as follows:

"Yoga is integration and harmony between thoughts, words and deeds or integration between head, heart and hands." Think straight (positively) talk straight (honestly) and act straight (fearlessly and with love and perfection). This is Yoga. For a layman, Yoga practice bestows a healthly mind in healthly body; it gives peace and happiness within oneself.

Never, never break your promise. Keeping up your word is yoga; any failure, is dishonesty and disrespect of self.

A Glimpse of Chinese wisdom

A government official on a visit to China, expressed his desire to learn a little of Chinese Philosophy. His host and friend, therefore, arranged for him to visit a place called 'Desert Garden' – a beautiful garden with enchanting plants and flowers. But the officer wondered about the prefix 'desert', which actually confused him. Before long, they reached a sandy place surrounded on all four sides by a fence. At a corner was a small hut where an old man was sitting. With his small beard and dress, he appeared to be a philosopher.

After mutual introduction through the interpreter, they were seated. The conversation went briefly like this:

"Sir, I am keenly interested to learn something of Chinese wisdom, though the time at my disposal is very short."

The grand old man looked at the officer and pulled out a match-box from the officer's hand (being a chain smoker, he was also carrying a tin of cigarettes). The old man asked a question.

"What is this in my hand?"

"A match-box," the officer replied.

The old man threw it on the ground and said: "This is That."

Then indicating the open sandy place he asked another question: "What is this?"

The officer wavered for a little while. Then, the philosopher himself answered:

"This is That. Now your time is up. You seem to be a very busy man. Best of luck!"

"Thank you Sir, we take your leave."

So saying, they parted.

What is That?

God sends his yoga teacher to an ailing devotee

Shuppu was in tears when the doctor told her: "Sorry, Madam, we can't do anything further for you. Go home and come again after you gain some weight and strength. Meanwhile, you have medication to take. Surgery is totally ruled out for the moment."

This was the second time she had been sent away, after

exhaustive tests in the hospital; and this alone demoralized her. Ten days' stay and so many needles and punctures - all to be repeated again after a few months! Then the surgery! Who knows whether she would survive? She didn't know what to do. After some silence, she turned to her husband, Pappu and said: "I want to pray in a nearby temple, before you take me home - any temple – the one which is the nearest."

This is how they ended up in Sri Raghavendra Swami temple. After their prayer, they both went home.

Next day, an old man tapped at their door and introduced himself as a yoga teacher. He told Pappu.

"I came to see my daughter who is living in this township. She told me about a lady here suffering due to hypothyroid. Yoga is the best therapy to cure this disorder. Will she be interested?"

After doing a simple yogasana called "*Sarvangasana*" for a month, her condition improved. She felt more optimistic. Slowly she returned to perfect health.

There is a saying that God is '*Bhakta-paradheena*', which means that He is devotee's dependent. He sends the right people, teachers, Gurus, doctors etc. to devotees at the right time. What is the right time? That is the time when you surrender to Him and look to Him for help as the only refuge.

Yoga as an inexpensive aid to health

These days, every profession has its own built-in health hazard in the form of added comforts and reduced physical work. Clerks and desk-workers sit and work and, due to wrong postures and lack of physical exercise, they get back-pain, piles, indigestion etc. Traffic police, securityguards and barbers suffer from varicose veins due to their long hours of standing. Thus, whatever be the deficiency in the workplace and work process, ill-health is the result.

Yoga is one method of curing diseases. Much more, it prevents disease. A barber named Velayudhan became a victim of varicose veins; further more, mosquito-bites made it worse for him. The doctor's treatment proved too costly and he could not afford it. Simple jogging and a few yogasanas helped him to cure the disease. His 15 year old daughter had diabetes and that too, was totally cured by yogasanas.

Many are those who have been benefited in the area of hypertension and cardio-problems. There is no substitute for mental peace and happiness and medical science doesn't help in this area of spirituality. Yoga comes to the aid of those who have faith in it and wonderful are its results; this is proved by the many yoga practitioners. A few enlightened doctors with open minds are advising their patients to try yoga therapy, with or without medication, for specific health problems. Yoga has a wholistic approach and deals with a person, as a combination of body, mind and spirit—as a whole-being.

How to achieve a straight back and enhance your personality

Our backbone is made up of thirty three vertebrae. They are all small bones with intermediate spongy discs to cushion the joints. This construction helps us to bend the spine in all directions. Most of our work demands too much forward bending; with the result the back starts giving pain either at the top, middle or bottom joints. This is how a large number of people suffer from backpain. Tension or worries can also cause back pain.

In order to prevent back pain and, at the same time, to remain calm and quiet, it is necessary to maintain a correct posture of sitting straight. A straight back adds remarkably to the charm and personality of anybody. Whether boy or girl, young or old, a straight-back indicates confidence and creates a good impression. (A slight curvature on the upper back and an opposite curvature at the lower back are however unavoidable).

To achieve a straight back, one has to practise back-bending exercises along with rhythmic breathing, daily. This helps very much to strengthen the back. At the same time you must make an auto-suggestion: "I am straight – I will always be straight." If your resolve is a strong one and you practise daily, you will definitely achieve the desired result. Sitting straight in Vajrasan improves the posture very much.

Only backward bending is advised for those having back pain. Forward bending will aggravate the pain. So, if you have back-problems, avoid forward bending as far as possible.

'Be straight' also means be honest and truthful. A person with a straight-back, and his chest forward, puts up an appearance of

courage and honesty while a hunchback is often misunderstood as a crook. Though appearance could lead to an error in judgement, health, vigour and 'good look' demands a straight back.

How to keep smiling and keep away all diseases

(A summary of Dada J.P. Vasvani's talk on 'Therapy of Cheerfulness'.)

Dada Vasvani is a well-known educationalist, saint and founder of many hospitals and institutions, for welfare of the poor and orphans. He suggests, 'Therapy of Cheerfulness' to ward off tensions and worries.

"All great masters and scriptures remind us that the day on which we have not laughed, is a lost-day": So says Dada Vasvani.

"Life should be full of joy, laughter and full of fun. For a charitable hospital and workshop for the poor and downtrodden, a seth (businessman) wrote a cheque for Rs. 10 lakhs as donation. He passed on the cheque to the collection committee members who had visited him in his house for collection purpose, but the members soon found that he had not signed the cheque." The seth told them politely: "Our scriptures say that all donations must be made anonymously!" He got into his car and pushed off.

Dada tells many jokes during his talk and make us laugh and laugh.

Laughter makes you happy not vice versa–This is the truth

Though there are allopathy, homeopathy, water-therapy, chromotherapy etc., therapy by cheerfulness is the best. The day a man takes to laughing light heartedly and uncomplainingly, all sickness and even old age will keep off. Even incurable diseases like cancer can be cured by laughter therapy. Many people all over the world have cured themselves of cancer in this manner. Norman Cossin is one of them who also wrote a book describing his experiences and how he cured even deadly diseases by laughing. Every hospital must have a laughing lobby and jokers, just as in the courts of kings, in the past. All tension and worries will cease to eat away human lives.

Prana Shakti (Cosmic Energy)

The vital life force, called "*Pranashakti*" sustains life. This is little understood. Laughter is internal jogging to increase *pranashakti.* It promotes blood circulation and uproots many disease carrying germs which try to settle in our body.

Practical suggestions:

1. Get up in the morning with a smile on your face and say: "Good morning, Lord." Many have found, this works miracles in their lives.
2. **Smile always**–Mahatma Gandhi used to say: "You are not dressed completely if you don't wear a smile." He and many of his followers practised this dictum.
3. **Laugh at least three times a day** – Once before breakfast, next before lunch and third before dinner. It would be very nice, if the family sits around the dining table and one of them tells a few jokes.
4. **Develop a healthy sense of humour**–Don't take life very seriously. Life is a drama; the world is the stage. But don't tell a joke that will hurt somebody – tell only *sattvic* humour (harmless Jokes).
5. **Laugh at yourself—**Laugh at our own weakness and oddities.
6. **Look only the bright side of life—**Never, never, see the dead past, the unknown future and dark side of life.
7. **Never let anyone drive you—**You should always remain at the driver's seat. Don't let others drive you crazy, make you angry or drive you mad.
8. **Rejoice in everything that happens as the WILL OF GOD—**God, as the most loving Father, will bring only good to you.
9. **Always have a positive attitude towards life—**Whatever good things you expect will happen to you.
10. **Laugh and make others laugh—**Laugh and laugh. Laughter is infectious. Involves others in laughter. Thus, all auspicious things will happen to you.

"May the blessings of my master, your master, all prophets and saints of the world, be on you and your family."

Thus concludes Dada Vasvani, his practical suggestions. "These are to be practiced; not simply heard and forgotten," he adds.

The Miracle of water Prana

Medical science reveals that next to air, water is the element most necessary for survival. A normal adult is 60 to 70 percent water. We can go without food for almost two months, but without water for only a few days. Yet most people have no idea how much water they should drink. In fact, many live in a dehydrated state.

Without water, we would be poisoned to death by our own waste produces. When the kidneys remove uric acid and urea, these must be dissolved in water. If there isn't enough water, wastes are not removed effectively and may build up as kidney stones. Water also is vital for chemical reactions in digestion and metabolism. It carries nutrients and oxygen to the cells through the blood and helps to cool the body through perspiration. Water also lubricates our joints.,

We even need water to breathe:

Our lungs must be moist to take in oxygen and excreate carbondioxide.It is possible to lose half a litre of liquid each day just exhaling.

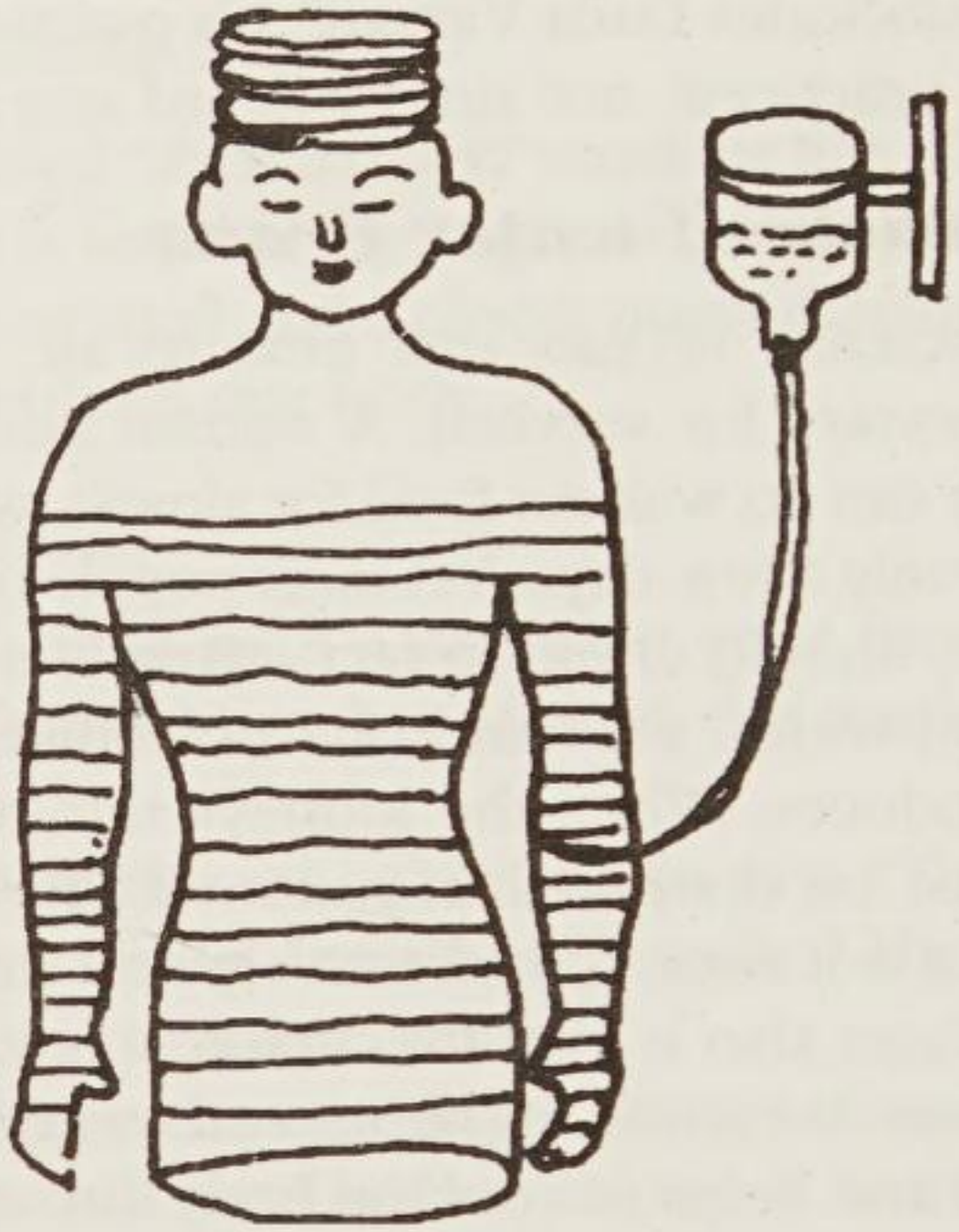
So, if we don't drink sufficient water, we can impair every aspect of our physiology.

Dr.Howard Flaks, a bariatric (obesity) specialist in California, says, "By not drinking enough water, many people incur excess body fat, poor muscle tone and size, decreased digestive efficiency and organ function, increased toxicity in the body, joint and muscle soreness and water retention.

Water retention? If we are not drinking enough water, our body may retain water to compensate. Paradoxically, fluid retention can sometimes be eliminated by drinking more water, not less..

Proper water intake is a key to weight loss, says obesity specialist Dr.Donald Robertson. "If people who are trying to lose weight, don't drink enough water, the body can't metabolize the fat adequately. Retaining fluid also keeps weight up."

"The minimum for a healthy person is eight to ten glasses (2 to 2-1/2 litres) of water a day," says Dr. Flaks. "You need more, if you exercise a lot or live in a hot climate. And overweight people should drink an extra glass for every 10 or 11 kilos they exceed their ideal weight."



Man is 60% water

According to Yoga science, drinking 3 glasses of water in the morning before breakfast and doing *asanas* and repeating the same practice till the bowels are cleared, is good for certain stomach ailments, as it cleans the digestive track.

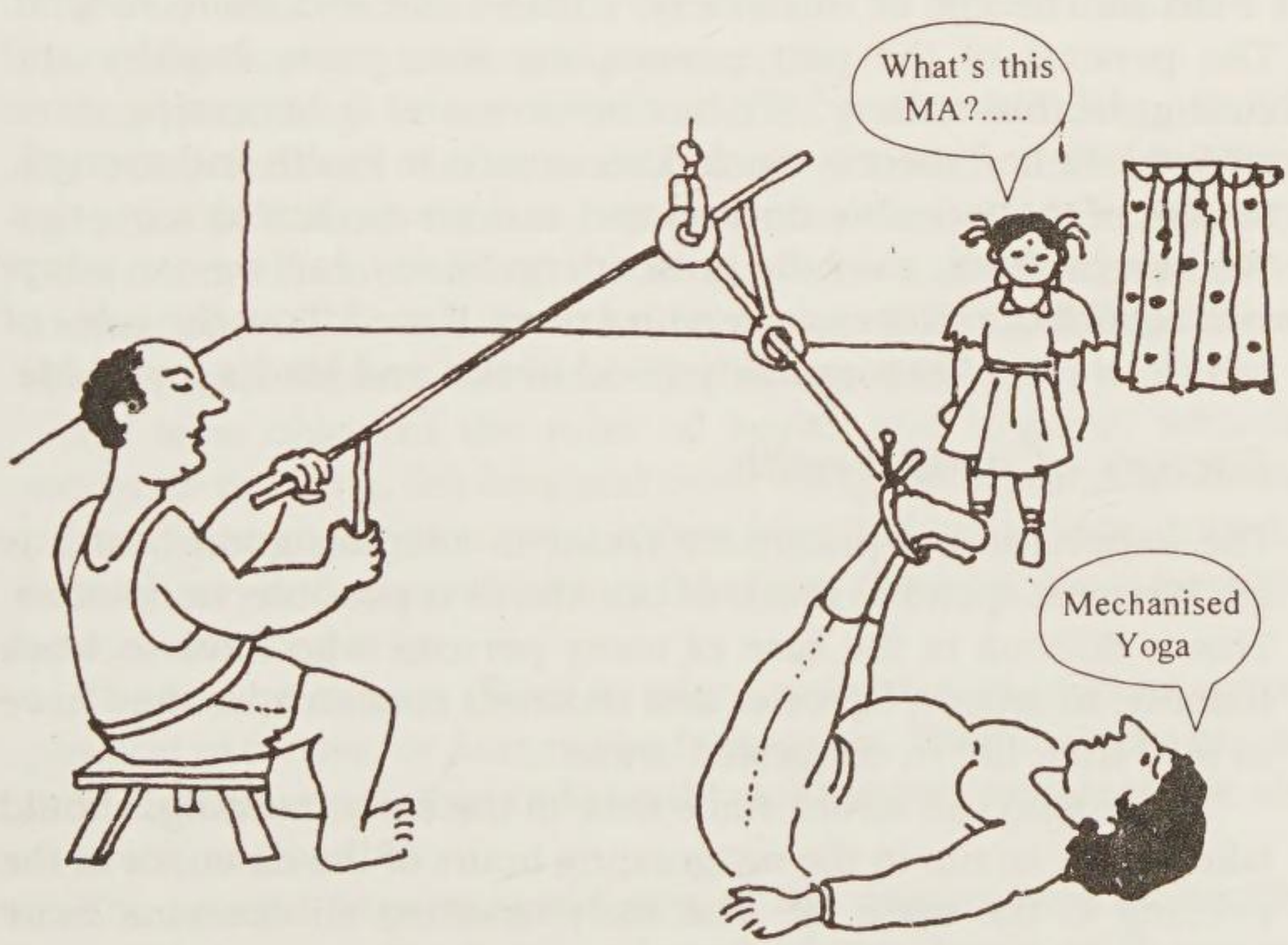
'Japanese Association for the Sick' recommends drinking 5 glasses of water in empty stomach in the morning is a good practice, to cure all stomach ailments. Besides, it cures asthma, diabetes, high bloodpressure and many other diseases also.

Water has *pranashakti* (cosmic energy). Recently a Jain saint fasted for 365 days, drinking only warm water. How his life was sustained, only by water, appears to be a miracle.

Conclusion

And by consuming those ten glasses of water throughout the day, we could be on our way to a healthier, leaner body. Pre-boiled and cooled water prevents watercarrying diseases such as Jaundice.

Our city has no open space except the sky!



Slim-Down Exercises
Yoga Commercialised

Practice–8—*Way to Radiant Health*

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

Health is joy. Health is wealth. Health is the elixir of life. Without health there is no enjoyment. Without health one cannot earn well. Without health one cannot attain desired objects. Without health one cannot put in strenuous efforts. Without health there is no earnestness in work. Without health life becomes a burden. Foremost attention should, therefore, be given towards keeping perfect health.

Without cause, there is no effect. So there is no sickness without violation of the laws of Nature. Nature always tries to keep up health, but we bring on sickness by continuous violation of the laws of Nature. Of course, naturallaws are relentless. There is no mercy.

There is seldom any sickness amongst the animal kingdom. They do not violate the laws of Nature and therefore, they seldom require any medical help. Only rarely, a few domesticated animals require some medical help as they cannot lead a natural life.

Before the age of machinery, a man's life was more natural. The persons of the past generations were more healthy and strong. In this century, life has become and is becoming more artificial. Hence, there is much deterioration in health and strength, inspite of innumerable doctors and various medical discoveries. We have no sway over the present conditions, but we can adapt and control ourselves to a certain extent. If we follow the rules of health, we can keep up fairly good health and lead a joyful life.

Factors of good health

The important and prominent factor in keeping good health is air. We must spend as much of our life, as is possible, in open air. This is difficult in the case of many persons who have to work indoors, in offices, factories and business concerns, as they have to lead their life in congested areas.

Those who can afford some time in the early morning, should take a walk or run in the invigorating hours of the dawn, or in the evening in the open air. The early morning air contains more ozone and hence is most pleasant and effective in giving us exuberant health.

This alone is not sufficient. There is also the necessity of

avoiding unwholesome foods. Tea, coffee and other stimulants should be avoided as far as possible. Abstinence from alcohol, cold drinks and other beverages is also necessary.

The practice of going to bed early and rising in the early morning is also most essential. Working till late hours at night should be avoided as far as practicable.

Celibacy is also necessary for maintaining radiant health. All excesses in enjoyment should be avoided. Too much of cinema-going habit is also a sin against health and Nature.

As the saying goes, "A sound mind in a sound body," it is the mind which controls the body. So we should try to keep our mind as cheerful as possible under all circumstances. A strong mind helps much to ward off ill-health; not only this, but it aids us in preserving good health and effecting a speedy cure. It is the mind which creates heaven or hell. So we should try to keep cheerful at all times. Knowing that circumstances are not under our control, it is our duty to struggle hard against circumstances with a hope of success, which is slow but sure, if our attempts are in the right direction.

If you want radiant health, then return to Nature and have a blooming face and a charming personality.

Body-building is the foundation of nation-building. Build the body through Nature's aids. Avail yourself of the healing agencies of Nature–the sun, water, air, earth, fasting, herbs, etc. Observe the laws of eating, drinking, sleeping, thinking and conducting one-self as laid down by the ancient Rishis and Sages. Live in tune with Nature. Use the herbs and greens.

He who observes the rules of health and hygiene, who is moderate in eating, drinking and other things, who is regular in his prayer, japa, meditation, who is free from jealousy, pride, hatred, who observes Brahmacharya, is free from diseases. He is healthy and attains longevity.

Those who cannot afford to take a walk should practise some physical exercises, or Asanas and Pranayama. They should wear as little clothes as possible and should expose their bodies to the air as much as possible.

The second important element in the preservation of health is water. As soon as we get up from bed, we should drink one or two glassfuls of water which helps the evacuation of bowels. The next in importance is cold bath, and that also should be taken in

the morning as far as possible. After bath, the body should be rubbed well by a towel. A cup of hot water half an hour before meals, helps much to keep up good health.

The third most important element in the preservation of health, is sunlight. Sunlight is most essential for the growth of both the plant and the animal kingdoms. Those plants and trees which do not get enough sunlight become stunted in growth. If we expose our bodies to the rays of the morning sun, we gain much vitality from sunlight. There should be enough light in places of work. The doors and windows of the houses should be kept open to allow sunlight to enter. Even in winter the doors and windows should be kept open and we should protect our bodies with enough clothes. The dress should be always light and loose.

Food is also an important factor in the preservation of health.

The most natural food of man is green vegetables, fruits, roots, milk, i.e uncooked food. The animals which live on grass, green leaves, fruits and roots are stronger than man. The cooking of food takes away many vital elements from the food, and so we cannot get the needed vitality from the foods which are conventionally cooked.

Since age-long, man has been accustomed to cooked foods, it becomes difficult to change the old habits, all of a sudden. So the golden means is to take one meal as usual, and the next meal should consist of milk and fruits only.

CHAPTER 10

HOW TO LOVE AND START LIVING

Life is love

Life is not logic. Life is love. Logic is a complicated phenomenon whereas love is a simple, innocent communion.

People say, love is blind, because they do not know what love is. I say unto you, only love has eyes; other than love, everything is blind.

Once your eyes of love are opened, things which you have not dreamed of, start becoming realities.

—OSHO

What is true love?

"Ordinarily, love based on physical affinity is a source of misery, both to the lover and the beloved. But divine love based on the feeling of oneness, is sublime. It is the source of pure bliss. Here, you love another not because he is a relation of yours, but because you and he are one in spirit.

Love in the making, sees faults; love in the fulfillment sees none. Seeing faults is like cutting love into pieces and even murdering love. By so doing, we keep the mind (ego) alive. We have to go beyond the mind.

Love breaks all barriers.....But to love truly, one must have knowledge of the Self. On the basis of Self-knowledge alone, can one love all with an equal eye."

—SWAMI RAMDAS.

Love is forgiveness; has no past records

Love is patient and kind;

Love is not jealous; it is not arrogant or rude;

Love is not boastful.

Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;

It does not rejoice at wrong; but rejoices in the right.
Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things,
Endures all things.

—*I Corrinthians* (13:4 0. 13.)

Love does not keep past records
Love is forgiveness

—ANON

"Forgive your brother, his sins, seventy times seven"

—JESUS CHRIST

To err is human
To forgive is divine

Love for enemies

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your friends, Hate your enemies"

"But now I tell you; love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may become the sons of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun to shine on bad and good people alike and gives rains to those who do good and to those who do evil. Why should God reward you, if you love only the people who love you? Even the tax-collectors do that! And if you speak only to your friends, have you done anything out of the ordinary? Even the pagans do that! You must be perfect–just as your Father in heaven is perfect!"

—JESUS CHRIST

From *Good News Bible; St. Mathew* (6-43)

The parable of the unforgiving servant

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked:

"Lord, if my brother keeps on sinning against me, how many times do I have to forgive him? Seven times?"

"No, not seven times," answered Jesus, "but seventy times seven, because the Kingdom of heaven is like this: Once there was a king who decided to check on his servants' accounts. He had just begun to do so when one of them was brought in, who owed him millions of pounds. The servant did not have enough to pay his debt, so the king ordered him to be sold as a slave, with

his wife and his children and all that he had, in order to pay the debt. The servant fell on his knees before the king, 'Be patient with me,' he begged; 'and I will pay you everything'. The king felt sorry for him; so he forgave him the debt and let him go."

"Then the man went out and met one of his fellow-servants who owed him a few pounds. He grabbed him and started choking him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he said. His fellow-servant fell down and begged him, 'Be patient with me and I will pay you back.' But he refused; instead he had thrown him into jail until he should pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were very upset and went to the king and told him everything. So he called the servant in. 'You worthless slave,' he said. 'I forgave you the whole amount you owed me, just because you asked me to. You should have had mercy on your fellow-servant, just as I had mercy on you.' The king was very angry, and he sent the servant to jail to be punished until he should pay back the whole amount."

And Jesus concluded, "That is how my Father in heaven will treat everyone of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart".

—JESUS CHRIST
From *'Good News Bible'*
St. Mathew (18-21)

Jesus teaches about divorce

Some Pharisees came to him and tried to trap him by asking, "Does our Law allow a man to divorce his wife for whatever reason he wishes?"

Jesus answered, "Haven't you read the scripture that says that in the beginning the Creator made people male and female? And God said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife and the two will become one.' So they are no longer two but one. Man must not separate, then, what God has joined together."

The Pharisees asked him, "Why, then did Moses give the law for a man to hand his wife a divorce notice and send her away?"

Jesus answered, "Moses gave you permission to divorce your wives because you are so hard to teach. But it was not like that at the time of creation. I tell you, then, that any man who divorces his wife for any cause other than her unfaithfulness, commits

adultery if he marries some other woman."

—JESUS CHRIST

Practice–9—*How to Love*

Those who truly love are very few. As Swami Vivekananda has said, "We are traders in life, in virtue, in religion and in love also."

We have to go to a Sat-Guru and learn from Him, the basic lessons of 'How to love and start living'.

A group of twenty European ladies, who were all divorcees, came to Anandashram and told their tales of woe to Swami Satchidanandaji. They, even have difficulties, living with their own children! "All our children are violent, disobedient and many run away from home....How is that in India? It is not also happening there?" They wanted to know.

In India too, divorces are taking place. The old order is rapidly disappearing; the east is starting to imitate the west. However, things are not yet at an explosive level, as in the west.

Regarding 'Mutual Love' Swami Satchidanandaji says:

"There must be mutual love and regard and also respect to one another. It means a lot of 'give and take' must be there. For this, we must be prepared to humble ourselves before others without asserting our individuality. For the sake of harmony in the family, we must be able to sacrifice a little – to sacrifice our ego-sense to some extent. This means, where there is conflict, we should try to be humble, give up our authority or assertions and try to accept the other's viewpoint. In this way, we will be able to solve the problem. Mathaji, Pujya Krishnabai feels that when both husband and wife go to work, leaving the children in the hands of an ayah, their parental love will be lost to the children and they might easily go astray. For this reason, she advocates that the role of women is at home."

(from the book: "Mundane to Spiritual" by Swami Satchidananda)

Love thy wife first—the two gears of the universal love-gear-system

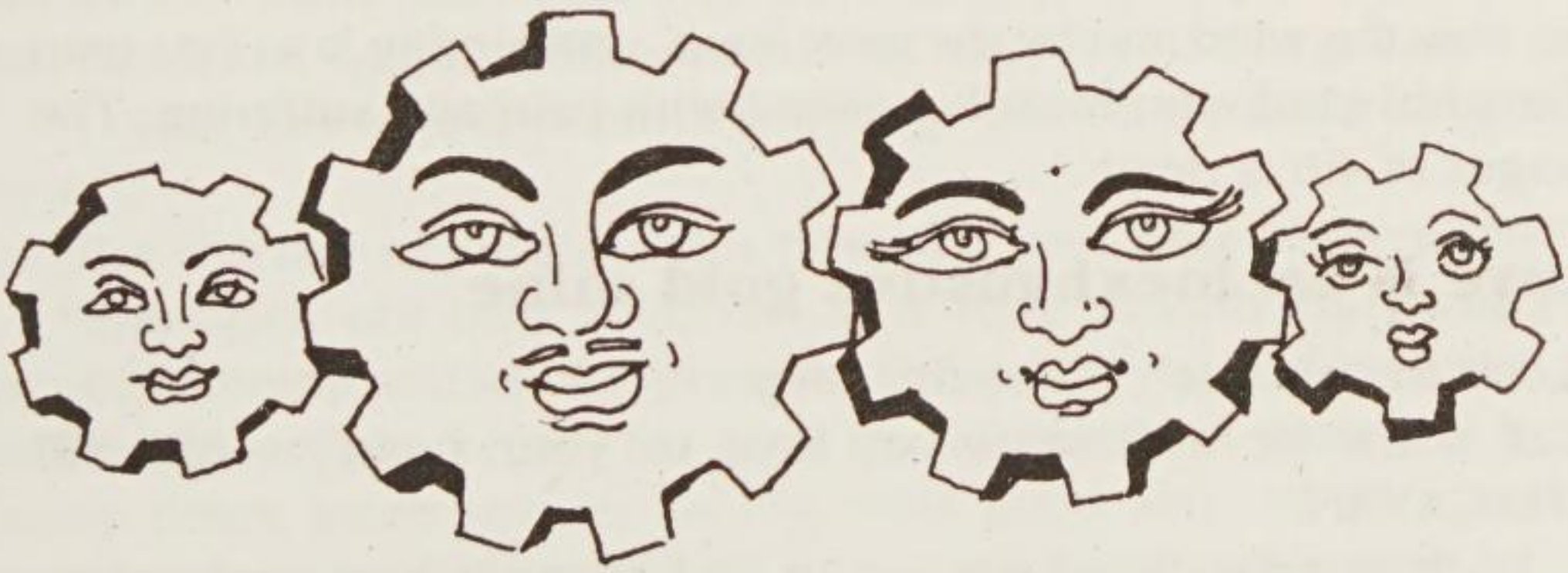
"Husband and wife are the two gears of the universal love-gear-system. They should not get out-of-alignment and fall apart," says Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada. 'Pure Love' is the lubricant. The truth of the above statement, which is otherwise told as "marriages are

made in heaven," is illustrated in the following anecdote:

In 1955, Vimala was a student of Calcutta university. One night, she had an unusual dream of being in Kashi (Benaras). Shė saw the river Ganga flowing and pilgrims bathing in the ghats. Though she had not been to Kashi before, she saw the temple of Shri Viswanathji. Entering the premises of the temple, she met a young man. Some unknown voice told her that she was in Kashi and that the person in front of her was her husband. Next morning, she remembered the dream so clearly that she could even draw a map of Kashi and the layout of the temple and the location of the river etc. She produced it to her father, Mr. Shankar. However, the boy's caricature was not drawn and remained with her as a mental picture.

Shankar was excited. They took a train the very next day and reached Kashi. Vimala lead her parents to the temple, without a guide, as if she was familiar with the place. But the young man did not arrive in the scene. They prayed to Lord Viswanathji and Mother Annapurna for their blessing and returned.

On reaching Calcutta, they received a marriage proposal which culminated in Vimala's marriage with the same young man whom she dreamt of. The bridegroom, his mother and sister had been in Kashi on a pilgrimage, at the same time when the message was telecast to Vimala. What a profound forecast and mystical telecast! No doubt, that it was beyond human capacity.



Husband and wife are two main-gears in the family gear-system. When they match well and run smoothtly, without noise, the other gears in the system also run well.

Love is the Lubrication

What brought them together? their karma?

Is it the *Karma* of their past life that brings a man and woman together and makes them husband and wife?

This is a million dollar question.

Our ancestors did a lot of research on this subject and all the great masters have supported without exception, the Karma theory.

A devotee of God wanted to know, why he suffered terribly severe poverty for thirty years in the early part of his life. He prayed to God intensely for a few days. The Lord was pleased and showed his past life in the form of a vision. The devotee had been a *pujari* in his past life. After his marriage, he indulged too much in a materialistic life and neglected his duties. He made lots of money and led a corrupt life. The result was that, in this present life, he had to face immense poverty – all as a result of bad *karma* of his earlier life as a *pujari*.

His wife also had the same vision at the same time! This proves that they were also husband and wife in their past life.

"All your sufferings are your own making," says Sri Kalki. "They are the return for your bad actions of this Life or the life before this."

Swami Rama Tirtha says:

"Do any kind of wrong, do any mischief, harbour in your mind any kind of wrong; do these wrong deeds, commit these sins even at a place where you are sure nobody will catch you or find you; where nobody will call you to question. Sow these seeds of evil wherever you please, even in a place as secure as any fort could be; sow the wind and by the most stern, unrelenting law, you reap the whirlwind; you must be visited with pain and suffering. The wages of sin is death."

Love is an inexhaustive gold mine

"Love thy spouse" – The first step
"Let there be a fountain of love in your heart" —SRI SRI BHAGAVAN.

Look at a family where a man and his wife love each other. The children also love their parents. They live with parents joyfully; blossom well; become loyal and grateful citizens. Where there are fights, children run away or abstain for long hours from their unhappy homes. They spend more time with others, some

times in bad company too but still prefer them rather than their parents. In order to prevent such calamities in families, Sri Sri Bhagavan teaches the first step of dharma: "Love thy spouse as thyself."

Give love to everyone – love is an inexhaustive gold mine in your heart

When a husband loves his mother, sisters and brothers, the wife need not be perturbed – Love is an inexhaustive gold mine.

A mother should not be jealous of her daughter-in-law whenever son loves his wife. Quarrels over dowry leading to bride-burning are typically Indian issues which will cease to dominate the scene of life when the people enjoy the eternal bliss, called love. Let them know, it is inexhaustive. Real Love is 'liking each other inspite of.....'

"Do not hurt your spouse" – the second step

In the examination of family life, wife is a question paper for the husband to answer and husband is a question paper for the wife to answer. "Family is a crucible where each member is being tested."

"Man needs not go to forest and do penance (*tapas*). In the midst of family, he can get '*moksha*', the freedom and enlightenment." So family life is spiritual provided love is the theme of life.

"If you hurt your wife, I will put you in her shoes and you will suffer the same hurt that you gave her. If the wife hurts the husband, she will also likewise suffer," says Sri Sri Bhagavan.

"On the day of judgement, I will judge you on the basis of your love."

"But the day of judgement is now and here only, remember!"

"You shall not hurt anybody. You have already hurt many people. Repent and ask forgiveness. Then only you will be saved. Sufferings are the return for your bad actions but they will be many times more severe. So are your good acts, of love and compassion, their return will be richer and highly rewarding."

"God is all-love, love everybody" – the final step

"When you repent with all your mind and heart, God will forgive you". 'May your mind be always filled with auspicious thoughts.

May your heart be always filled with Love.'

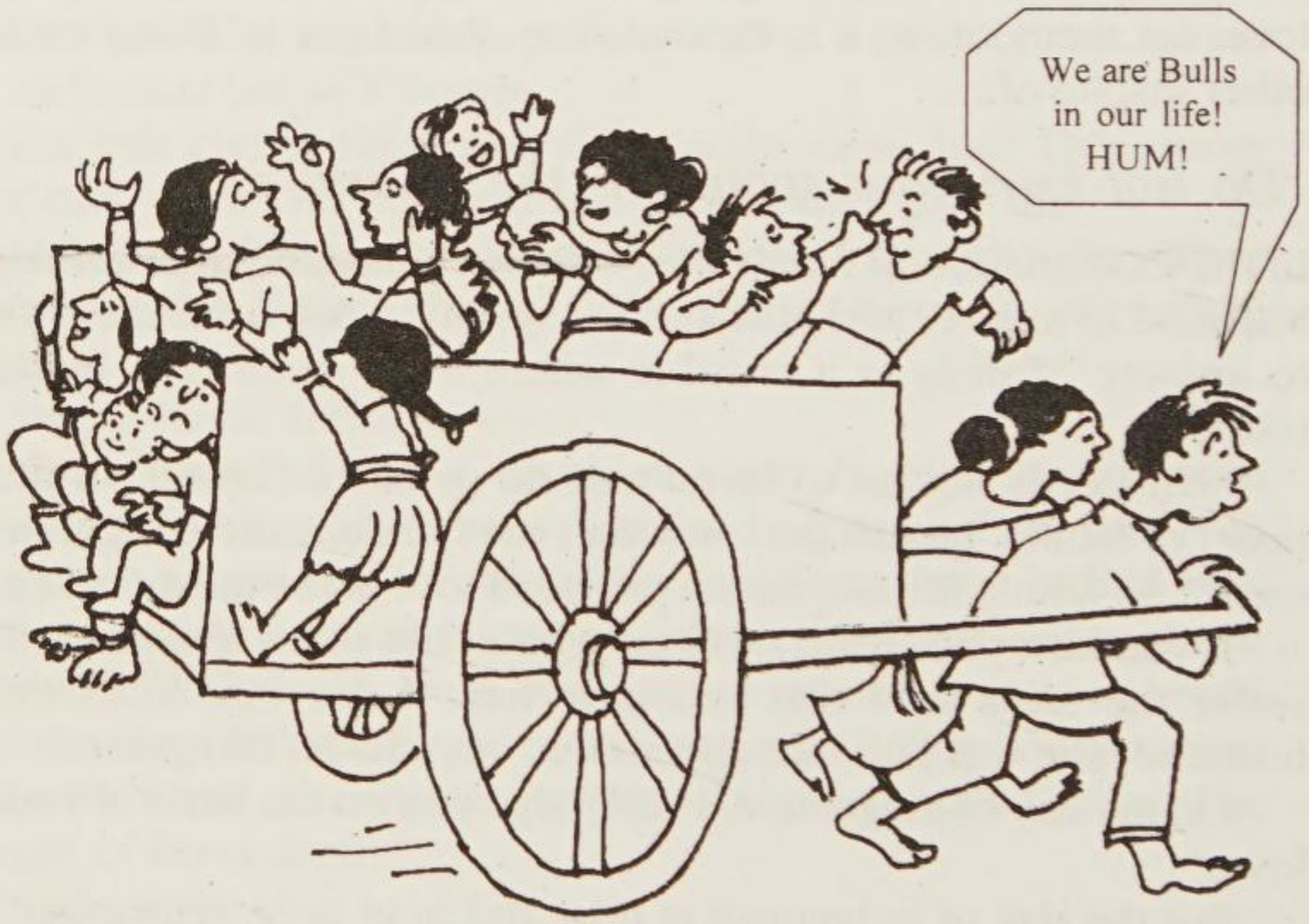
"You will not suffer any longer provided you stop hurting and start loving with your whole heart." "When you are loving all, I will give you *Jeevan–mukthi* (liberation from suffering) now and here."

The way of Bhagavat Dharma will take us to *mukthi* 'now and here'.

So assures Sri Sri Bhagavan.

May his blessings go with this humble gift to the reader !

—A DEVOTEE



Incredible is the Achievement of Family. Welfare Scheme sponsored by the Government of India. The situation forty years ago and now, shows a vast difference in Life Style

Life is a Wonderful Picnic!

See divinity in spouse

Many are the unfortunate victims of brain-tumour who get operated by surgeons and become paralysed for rest of their lives. One such instance is narrated below.

Brahmanand and his wife were enjoying the sun-shine of their middle age; their only son had just started going to school, when a tragedy happened. The wife was suspected of having a tumour in her brain. After surgery, the patient became paralytic on one side.

Brahmanand and his wife slowly accepted the cruel fate, which had befallen them. Apart from his office hours, the rest of his life was devoted totally to serving his wife. He started seeing divinity in his wife and his wife saw divinity in her husband too. Thus their life was transformed into a spiritual yoga in which a higher level of love was uniting the two and making them realize that life is worth living, despite its sharp edges.

Verghese was another person who became totally paralytic, after brain surgery. A sixty year-old man became like a six months old baby. He could not recognize, talk to or understand anybody, even his wife. His wife had to treat him like a baby. He survived only 7 months after the ill-fated surgery.

Verghese was a pious man. He had undivided devotion to God and he did God's work, taking the divine message to many villagers in India, who would otherwise remain ignorant and superstitious. When this tragedy happened to him, all his friends wondered, why had he and, above all, his wife, been punished by God?

Can tragedy be a mental purifier?

Whether the answer is "Yes" or "No", all the above four persons were pure-hearted. They did not have the least malice or prejudice. On the other hand, they had unselfish love and compassion. Blessed are the pure in heart; for they see divinity in their spouses.

The ego poison was taken out

"Thank you my Lord.....
I am the deadliest poison....."

"Thank you, my Lord, You made me realize who I am. I am the deadliest poisonous snake; I am Kaliya."

Ego was the poison that the Serpent injected into Eve in the Garden of Eden. Instantaneously Eve got thrown into a state of maya/illusion/ignorance. Since then, the feeling of individuality, of being separate from others, has blinded mankind. All selfish thoughts and actions started from then and have been passed on to following generations, even multiplying with time. We are now in the Kaliyuga, the age of Kaliya, the zenith of egotism. The ego plays its drama in everyone with the few exceptions of the enlight-ened Gurus.

Realization that one is a Kaliya is, in itself, a step to higher awareness.

Congratulation to our friend in the picture!

Krishna's Love

PART I

I narrate the following incident in all humility for the benefit of all His devotees and to assure them that Guruvayurappan never fails to listen to your Prayer.

I have been an ardent devotee to Lord Guruvayurappan right from my childhood onwards. Besides regular prayers I used to open my heart to Him for solace and guidance whenever I faced any problem. As I grew up, this became a second nature to me and I used to mentally surrender unto Him. I developed a sort of confidence that He would come to my help when needed.

After my marriage I left for Jamshedpur where my husband was employed in Tata Steel. Through Guruvayurappan's grace it was at this period I got a chance to get in contact with Swami Sivananda Saraswathy. I was then looking forward to have the benefit of guidance from a proper person for spiritual knowledge and practices. Thus, this came as my first step when Swamiji gave me *Mantra Diksha* and took me as a disciple. I owe a lot to this great soul for all his advices and directions later which in turn made me more and more attached to my Sri Krishna

—LORD GURUVAYURAPPAN.

But some how, I was not happy with the life and amenities in an industrial town as Jamshedpur. Looking back, I feel it might have been due to the fact that I had left the city life in Madras where I had been staying for years. Further, Jamshedpur was not as developed as it is today. This left a lurking desire in me to have a change of place. It was however impossible for a transfer of job from the Steel Town where the industry was located. The only alternative was for my husband to leave Tata Steel and take up an appointment elsewhere. As he was having a fairly lucrative job and considering his young age and career prospects, this was least advisable. I was, therefore, compelled to curb my desire for a change of place. After a while I became a mother and this made me all the more desirous to have a change of stay in a Metropolitan city. I had my relatives and friends in Calcutta and Madras at that period and I wished I too could be with them. I started *praying* daily to Guruvayurappan to help me out. Days passed and my prayers persisted rather vehemently. About six months passed without any solution in sight. But I never lost hope in getting my prayers heard.

Imagine my surprise when one fine evening my husband comes back from office and informs me that he has been transferred on promotion to Calcutta. It was a surprising news to him also when just before leaving office, he was called by the General Manager to his room and told that on the basis of a recommendation received from my husband's departmental head, he was being chosen to head a newly opened division of the company at Calcutta. My husband had not even remotely known of such a possible opening. Afterwards we heard that many persons with lot of influence behind, had been silently working to get this post and for its creation even.

I stood stunned and enquired with wonder and glee "How could have this happened so suddenly?" My husband clarified—"PADMINI'S PRAYERS".

Within a week's time, we left for Calcutta in all happiness with our hearts full of thanks to Lord Guruvayurappan.

—(Late) PADMINI ARAVINDAKSHAN

Krishna's Love

PART II

How a Brahmachari was rehabilitated

Leaving Swargashram in Rishikesh, towards his home-town in Kanyakumari, Brahmachari Krishnadas finally landed himself in a midway ashram. As it happened to the king Thrishanku, Brahmachari had to stay in a middle place, a new ashram indefinitely. He was well received and lovingly treated and therefore, he stayed there for a month. Being very old, he received special care.

The ashram rules do not permit any aspirant to stay there for a longer time. He left Rishikesh due to ill-health and his inability to withstand the severe cold during winter in that Himalayan terrain. But he didn't reach his home-town, because his sister made it clear to him that he would not have a place in his house. Partition of parental property made her the sole owner of the house. The Brahmachari in a sacrificial mood gave up the ownership of his share of property also in favour of his sister whom he loved and trusted too much.

Brahmachari was a devotee of Lord Krishna and everyday he would wake up early morning and enter into the Lord's world through meditation followed by simple pooja, nama sankeertan etc. This way, his days were spent happily in Rishikesh and he had no problem for many years. His daily needs were met by Swargashram. He had absolute faith in Krishna and he knew that the Lord would solve his present problem of rehabilitation also. Now that a month was over, the question came up frequently in his mind where he would go. He had no money with him. He was surprised why his Lord remained silent. He started crying out to Him why was he put to hard test. Sometimes, out of his heart-burn, he would scold Him too. This situation continued for another month when this miracle happened.

Two of his old Swargashram friends, a Canadian and his wife who visited Rishikesh during their tour in India, made a second trip to Rishikesh. By then, the Brahmachari had already left Swargashram. They sent a picture post-card of Lord Krishna, an exact copy of Krishna's portrait that Brahmachari was worshipping daily. The picture gave him some solace. The Canadians got his address from a letter that he sent to an inmate of Swargashram.

The post-card mentioned that they were coming to meet him very soon. The card was written from Rishikesh, soon after their arrival there from Canada.

The Canadians came. They took him to Kanyakumari. Brahmachari was happily rehabilitated before they left for Canada.

The question is, who is the director of this drama?

Who gave him the unfailing love?

Krishna's Love

PART III

How to regain the love lost

Raghu aged around 60 years from Bombay was on a '*Bhajana*' trip to Guruvayoor. *Bhajana* is a few days of penance, observing certain self-restraint, so as to constantly remember God by attending all *pujas* and other festivities of the temple. He should eat only the *prasada* of the Lord given in the temple and nothing in a hotel. The *prasada*-meal (lunch) served, is for all devotees and there would be a large gathering waiting to partake the *anna-prasada* (sanctified food). Raghu was in the 'quene' waiting for his turn when this happened.

He used to be annoyed whenever some persons broke the 'quene' discipline and went ahead of him. He was shouting at them. He would lose his temper and scold them badly. A lady-devotee standing near him, watching the fun, asked him: "How does your wife tolerate you with your temper? I think she won't."

This was exactly what happened to him and why he came to Guruvayoor. His wife had deserted him and gone to live with her parents 40 km away from Guruvayoor. According to Raghu, 'his wife could not tolerate any longer his temper.' So she packed all her things and left home with a note on the table. That was three years ago. Since then, there was no meeting or any communication between them.

"What a shame," the lady asked him. "You, man, could not break this silly ice in the last three years? It is a pity."

Raghu was stunned. He could not say anything.

The lady advised, "After lunch, go straight to your wife. It is man's duty to break ice. Settle the matter and then come to Lord

Guruvayoorappan. Everything will be all right."

The next day, Raghu was searching the lady who advised him in the 'quene'. After meeting her, he profusely thanked her. He told her happily, how his affairs were settled with his wife.

"Look, you don't know me; nor I know you. Who brought us together in the 'quene' yesterday? That is only Guruvayoorappan. So, thank Him. This is all His play," said the lady, modestly and cheerfully.

"The only boon that I ask of thee ....."

During our pilgrimage to Mantralayam, we came across a Muslim devotee performing a very difficult *sadhana*, that we cannot even dream of doing it. Wrapping round both his knees with cloth, he 'walked on knees' along the rough stone-paved path, doing *pradaksina-namaskar*. In the mid-day hot sun, he was sweating heavily but he was not bothered. His concentration was truly on God. After this tough practice of nearly two hours, he went inside the temple and had *darshan*. Thereafter, he came out and sat before the portrait of Swamiji, chatting with Him for nearly half an hour. We could see him frequently wiping off his tears. While going out of the temple, he had a glow on his face, apparently very happy about his interview.

What a great and profound communion !

The second lover of God was also a Muslim. Near the Siva temple, Srinagar. Our friend Rai met him, offering prayers. He also was in deep communion with God. Tears of love were profusely coming out, that he was wiping them off and was emotionally choked. This was going on for a long time. While going out, Rai gave him a lift in his tourist car. Far away on a hill-top, Rai saw a white building and he asked the driver what was it? The driver replied, that too was a Hindu temple. The Muslim friend immediately corrected the driver saying, 'Don't say Hindu temple or Muslim mosque etc. All are houses of God; the same one God.'

These words inspired Rai very much. While talking about his Kashmir-trip, he mentioned this anecdote. We too were happy and inspired. We recollected what Sri Chaithanya Maha Prabhu sang about God, "O My Lord, Give me tears in abundance whenever I think or hear of Thee! This is the only boon that I ask of Thee!"

How great are those two devotees! "Rama and Rahim are one," says Shirdi Sai Baba.

Practice – 9—*Amma's love*

Darling Children,

Real Love and compassion have almost disappeared from the earth. These days love has become extremely scarce. Amma's Mission is to demonstrate pure and selfless love to the world and to awaken that divine love in mankind.

Today many, who as children used to pray for the health and longevity of their parents, are now cursing their parents who have grown old and infirm. They look upon their aged parents as a burden, and pray they will soon die. This is the kind of love we see in today's world. All worldly love seems to eventually turn into hatred. People become close only to be separated later on. No one loves another more than they love themselves. Amma's mission is to make people realize the insubstantial nature of worldly love, and to instil true love and spiritual values within them, through Her own example. Amma's message to the world is: "Awaken the Divine Love within yourself."

When Amma speaks about the limitations of worldly love, Amma certainly does not mean that we should stop loving others, or that we should dislike anyone. Amma is asking you to transform the selfish and desire – motivated love into a selfless love, free from any expectation. If our left hand is hurt, we will eagerly extend our right hand to take care of the wounded hand, giving it relief and solace. In the same way, we should be able to love and serve others, seeing ourselves in their place, seeing ourselves in them.

The Ganges, the holy river of India, springs from the lofty Himalayan peaks. It flows down through the valleys and the plains, purifying whoever comes to take a dip in it, be it a leper or a healthy man, a beggar or a millionaire, a man or a woman, a sinner or a saint; there are no distinctions whatsoever, Mother Ganges receives everyone with equal love and compassion. She never feels aversion towards anyone, only noble feelings towards all, whether or not they come to bathe in her sacred waters.

It is Amma's wish to be like Mother Ganges; She wishes to bathe everyone in the river of divine love and purify them of their inner impurities. Amma wants to be like an incense stick that burns itself up in order to spread a sweet fragrance to everyone throughout the world. The message of Amma's life is that we should all dedicate ourselves completely to the service of the world, giving solace and peace to all. It is Amma's wish that everyone of Her

children should dedicate their lives to spread peace and love throughout the world.

Children, real love and devotion to God is our compassion for the poor and the suffering. Feed those who are starving, help the destitute, console the distressed, give solace to the suffering – be charitable to all. This is Amma's message to you, to practise.

—MATHA AMRITANANDAMAYI

Key words for guiding our life:

Love all; it is loving God (Bhakti Yoga)
Serve all; it is worshipping God (Karma Yoga)

He is love

With a bow and arrow, He is Sri Rama,
With a flute in hand, He is Sri Krishna,
With a trident, He is Subramania,
With a cross, He is Jesus Christ,
Without a symbol, He is OM,
With or without symbol, He is Love.

CHAPTER 11

SILENCE GIVES STRENGTH

Sadhu T. L. Vaswani

I shed tears when I think of the shadows we run after – greatness, name and fame, publicity, popularity. All these are perishable things. The secret of national service is not there except in the life of those who drink the spirit of silence.

This morning, I desire to pass on to you a little thought, which may be expressed thus—Drink the spirit of silence. That wonderful hymn which you sing - the "*Shantipath*" – is it not fragrant with the message of silence? And, as you read one section after another of the ancient scriptures of India, don't you find that the one note repeated, again and again, is *Shanti*? And haven't you noticed that every Hindu prayer closes on this note of *Shanti, Shanti, Shanti*? Shanti was the dominant aspiration of the *Rishis*, of those great ones whose shadows still rest upon this beautiful place, Rajpur; for here we sit in the lap of the Himalayas. The *Rishis* were lovers of silence. And every great soul is a lover of silence. Of Buddha, we read that from time to time, he would sit under a tree in silent meditation. And of Jesus, we read that, when he was in the city to teach and preach and heal, he would spend the day in the midst of men, but when the night came, he sought the hillsides for silent communion.

Today, more than the ancient days, we need the healing, holy influence of silence. Am I wrong in saying that one feature of modern life is "noise"? We live in a world of noise more so, in India than in many other countries. I have sometimes wished that I lived in a sound-proof house! Modern India moves in a world of deafening noise. Our railway stations are so noisy: not so the stations of Japan. There, the porters will lift your luggage noiselessly. European houses, schools, colleges and libraries are more quiet than ours. We need to move in an atmosphere of silence. *Rishis* were sons of silence. Work, work hard; but don't ignore the value of silence. Let me ask you to set apart everyday at least one hour for silence.

Two blessings, specially, does silence bring. First, silence purifies. Carlyle wrote many volumes in praise of "the kingdom of silence''. He appeared at a time when industrialism was disturbing the aesthetic and spiritual outlook of England. He protested against commercialism and mammon-worship. Yes, there is kingdom of silence. Here, in Rajpur, you have splendid opportunity for communion with silence. You can go out for silent walks and, as you look at these wonderful hills, these tall trees, these mystic skies, something of Nature's beauty will pass into you and you will be purified. Silence purifies us. Silence also vitalizes us, giving us strength which you may spend in the service of others.

Here, then, are two of the blessings of silence. Silence purifies: Silence vitalizes. Sometimes you think silence makes a man weak. No; it makes him strong. After the silent-period is over a man may feel hungry, but hunger is a sign of returning strength. In silence flow into you, nature's healing forces and you become strong.

The *shakti* of silent work is what India needs today. In our 'public' life, alas! there is so often lovelessness; there is the desire to shine, and be 'great'. I long for the day when there will be bands of young men who will renounce low ambitions and who will have but this one 'ambition',— to be silent servers of India. I shed tears when I think of the shadows we run after – greatness, name and fame, publicity, popularity. All these are perishable things. The spirit of national service is not there, except in the life of those who drink the spirit of silence.

On this note let my talk close this morning. Silent service—may that be your aspiration, your *mantra* everyday! May you work in the spirit of silence! Then, may you get from the All-Giver, the *shakti* you need to build a mighty nation in the coming days.

Think in silence, 'the aim of life and how to achieve it in this Life'

1. Human life is a rare acquisition. Its purpose is to know the *Atman* – knowing which you have nothing more to know. Everyone can realize that the divine is within; God is within your heart. You are his embodiment. You are He, but you do not know it. There is a veil of ignorance separating you from God. Remove the veil. First God, everything else comes next.
2. The microcosm is the macrocosm. The individual is the

universal. God dwells in every being and every thing, however small, in His entirety and perfection. Think not in terms of the individual, but in terms of the universal. Do everything for the sake of God. Then your ego-sense will vanish and you will realize that you are the Universal Spirit – the Changeless, Eternal and the Infinite. This is your goal.

3. Your life is intended for the service of all. The expansion of the individual into the universal is possible only when God-thought rules your mind, when God-love fills your heart and God's will governs your activities. Whenever you see anybody, see not only the external form, but also the indwelling Reality. This is Spiritual Vision. This alone can free you from the sense of diversity and make you realize the Unity and Oneness of all existence. It is not merely in holy persons and places that you should see God, but in all, everywhere, even in the market place. You must always feel the Divine Presence in and about you.

—SWAMI RAMDAS (From "Thus Speaks Ramdas"
an Anandashram publication)

Our mind silence can solve all our problems—Gandhian method

Mahatma Gandhi solved many problems by understanding the problem first from as many angles as possible and then pushing it into his 'Silent-mind' or 'Inner-silence'. He would then wait patiently for the 'inner voice' to tell him the solution.

The evening prayer-meetings and meditation helped him in arriving at the 'Silent-mind' where the solution hid itself.

Many persons follow similar methods. Mr. Rai was General Manager of M/s. Davi Ashmore Construction Company. He would study all technical aspects of a problem connected with lifting heavy and bulky equipment and go to bed without thinking any more of it. Next morning he would always get the solution. Deep sleep is the silent valley of the mind, the superconscious mind where he had pushed the problem and from where the solution also emerged.

Mr. Soloman resorted to prayers to solve personnel problems; whereas Mr. Panikkar, Chief of Finance of Hindustan Petroleum, would do Transcendental Meditation. Many people do *puja* or worship of God at home. These methods are illustrated in the

experiences given in this book.

The 'Silent Mind' is called God by some masters. "I am silence," says Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. Others call it the Atman/ the 'Real-Self'.

Therefore the art of problem-solving is to use the power of Inner-Silence and, surrendering the ego, to submit the problem to God. By developing faith in the Almighty and believing that He will do the job of problem-solving, it is possible to relax and enjoy life.

These methods are not new. However one's own experiences reinforce our faith in them. These days it is the ego which dominates. Consequently, solutions to problems are often not found. Selfish, temporary and unfair solutions are due to the "ego", the wicked noisy mind. Qualitative and long-lasting solutions come from the Silent Mind/the Unselfish mind/the Witness/God/ the Conscience. God is "the WITNESS OF ALL". Consulting the 'Witness principle', one can solve any problem of any magnitude.

How to be silent and be a firstrank holder

He did his best, God did the rest

Our darling grand children,

SRIRAM was a 'Silent-Boy' of Balalok Higher Secondary School studying in class IX. His ambition was to be the best student and to pass his matriculation examination with high grades. He wanted to be a computer engineer. He was silent by nature at home, at school or everywhere.

He was a yoga student and he and his parents had some basic training in yoga. His father aspired for mental peace and happiness through yoga. His mother aspired for good health and a cure for her asthma. Sriram knew that yoga helps to improve concentration and memory power, which are essential for success in everything. The yoga-teacher taught him *Suryanamaskar* and told him that daily practice of *Suryanamaskar* will enhance intelligence, health and vigour. In addition, he taught 'Inner Silence' (*Antar Mouna*)– watching one's own breath in silence with or without the eyes closed.

When we want to achieve something, we should sacrifice/give up something else so that we can achieve our goal. In his case, Sriram gave up entertainment like watching TV. He understood

that a lot of time and mental power can be saved by not watching T.V. The same mental-power and time could be used for learning and studying for his examination.

Both Sriram and his parents did not watch T.V. for the next two years. Instead, full concentration and devotion were developed during this time. In the matriculation examination, he stood first in Tamilnadu. He became the proud son of his parents as well as hero of the school (bringing a good name to the school). He was praised by newspapers and journals. Many social and educational organizations honoured him. They invited him for special meetings and honoured him with praises and prizes.

High academic records are required for advanced studies in engineering, medicine or any field in the U.S.A. Though money-power can get many things in India, the U.S.A. is a nation where only the most intelligent students are selected for higher education. The U.S. attracts intelligent people from many parts of the world.

In order to qualify oneself for higher studies, as well as for jobs, one should have aspiration and an aim. Just like Sriram, you too can become one of the best students.

Aim for silence of the mind. Practice Yoga. Then you will be filled with good qualities such as devotion, good thoughts and aspiration. Then you will be able to achieve something great in life.

Silence has Healing Power

In a broad sense, "silence means not grumbling, not complaining, not losing one's temper and positively and hopefully submitting to the will of God."

Shankar, a very active and industrious supervisor in a tea-factory, contacted an infectious skin disease. Many doctors tried to treat him but failed both in allopathic and ayurvedic hospitals of high repute. Almost one year passed and his employer had no alternative but to refuse further sanction of leave. Shankar lost hope and he knew very well that he would lose his job, his only means of liveli-hood. His thoughts turned to God.

One night in a dream he saw the Goddess of his childhood days whom he remembered rarely later on, asked him to do two things so that his disease would be cured !

"Firstly, observe complete silence until you are cured. Secondly jog and jog as often as you can."

New hope was kindled in him but he never spoke about it to anyone. He remained silent all along. He got up from his mat and jumped a number of times. Slowly day by day his body became better and he was cured.

Shankar lived for many more years and eventually he broke his vow of silence. When he told us about this experience, his eyes were moist with tears and throat was choked with emotions. His faith in God increased manyfold by this experience.

Silence produces *pranic* energy in the human system and jogging/running helps better blood circulation. This distributes the healing power of *prana* to the sick tissues and cells – such was the explanation of a yoga teacher. However, when every person he approached failed, who helped Shankar? None but the Divine grace of the Goddess.

The four Himalayan Masters and their silent prayer for world peace

Yajna is a spiritual practice, like prayer, to focus the mind on God and His Glory. It can be a collective dedicated prayer of devotees for world peace.

Many yogis are living in the Himalayan ranges. Some of them are known to the local people whereas most of them are unknown and nobody has ever seen them also. Some of them are engaged in praying for world peace which is always under threat, while others seek God-realization for themselves.

A young spiritual aspirant, Janardhanaswami, was keenly interested to get in touch with those masters about whom he had heard a lot. The spiritual elevation and enlightenment of those great masters, attracted him to the Himalayas. He made several efforts and searched them in many regions but he could not find any master, anywhere. Therefore, he came to the conclusion that no such masters are living in the Himalayas. He had heard many wonderful stories regarding them; but now, he was full of disbelief. There was acute cold and heavy snowfall everywhere, in the higher mountain ranges. This made him think that nobody can survive there. He was very much discouraged and disappointed. At one stage, he wanted to give up *Samnyasa* and go back to his village to do some household activities, feeling that the many

things he had heard about the spiritual masters, appeared to be a hoax.

When his decision was announced that he was quitting *Samnyasa* it created a stir among his ashram inmates. A new *samnyasi* then came to him and introduced himself as a messenger from four yogis living in the Himalayas. The message was that Swami could go to the Himalayas and meet them, if he so wishes. Immediately, Swami was jubilant and felt that his long-awaited wish is going to be fulfilled. Therefore Swami and the Samnyasi started their journey to the mountains. Swami regretted his hasty remarks about 'the masters of Himalayas'.

After traveling a number of days through the snow covered Himalayan ranges, and walking along mountains and valleys, finally they reached a spot where the messenger said 'stop'. At that spot was a big rock. The messenger-*samnyasi* did something and the rock shifted its position. They could see an opening of a cave. They entered and Swami saw the rock door closing behind them. He wondered how this happened.

There was total darkness inside the cave, but the messenger guided Swami along a dark tunnel. It was very difficult and the tunnel narrowed down in many places. Occasionally they even had to crawl on their bellies. Finally, their long journey came to an end, in a rock chamber where he met four old *Yogis* sitting. There was light and in that light he saw those men. They greeted Janardhanaswami. They gave him a small piece of 'herb' and asked him to chew it. That herb had the power to quench thirst and hunger. Thus Swami was made comfortable in their company.

Slowly, Swami got used to the dim light of that 'under world'. Each Yogi was more than one hundred years old; to gauge their exact age was difficult. Their bodies had shrunk so much that they looked like pygmies. However, they had an aura around their bodies and they appeared to be in a state of bliss and peace.

Swami stayed there for a long time - he did not know exactly how many days. He felt that the great Himalayan Masters with whom he was living were most of the time praying for world peace. They did not have any contact with the outside world. They were not in need of food, water, cloth like ordinary people. Their existence was therefore unknown to the world. In absolute silence they prayed and lived.

Their bodies did not sweat and therefore there was no need for

cleaning their bodies. Besides the herbs, air was sufficient for their existence.

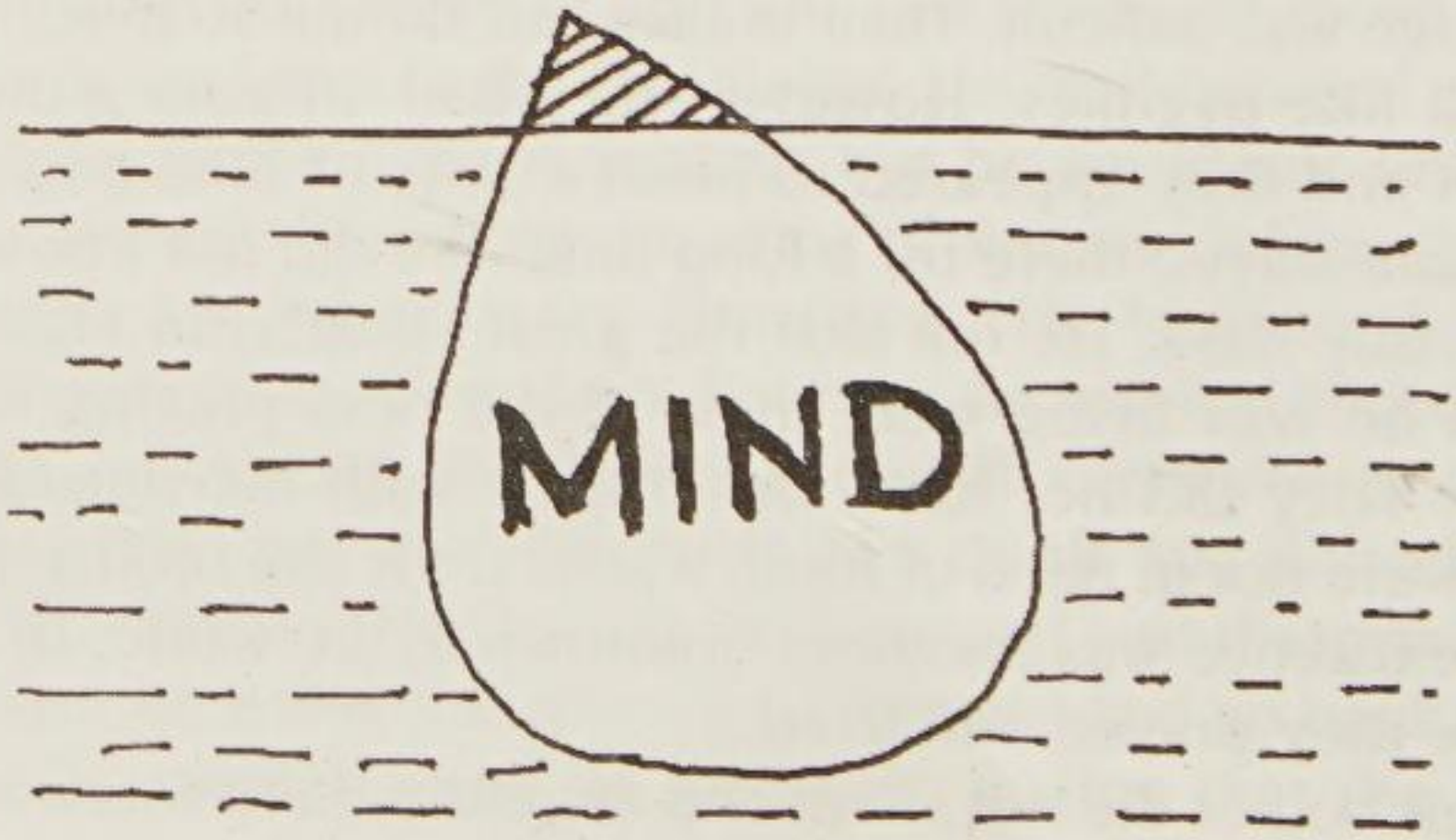
The Himalayan Masters told him that all that was written in the scripture and religious books is true. He need not doubt regarding "*Dharma*" (righteousness). *Dharma* prevails upon *adharma* (non-righteousness). In the battle between good and evil, the good will always finally win over evil. As a part of the divine plan, there are many yogies in the Himalayas doing *tapas* (austerity), for world peace and harmony. By their thought-power, many calamities are avoided. Therefore, persons like Janardhanaswamy should continue the *samnyasavritti* (duties) instead of running away from it. *Samnyasis* are required to help cleanse the mind of people in society.

Thus, Janardhanaswami came in direct contact with the Himalayan Masters whose existence, he had been questioning for some time. Now he was convinced about their existence and the purpose of their existence, Swami was inspired to continue his Samnyasa vritti.

After fulfilling their purpose of bringing Swami to the under world in the Himalayas, the great masters blessed him and asked him to continue his good work in the midst of people. From that day onwards, Swami continued his good work of spreading the message of God.

(This anecdote was narrated by the late Swamiji Kriyananda Saraswathi of Bihar School of Yoga at Bangalore Ashram. Swamiji had spent a few years with Janardhanaswami).

Meditation



Introduction to Meditation

The mind is often compared to an iceberg. The conscious part of mind is only 5% of the mind. The subconscious mind, deep-sleep mind and super-conscious mind, all together form 95% of the full mind. Thus we don't know our mind, to an extent of 95% ! We don't know our potential ! Wisdom, self-knowledge, permanent joy, intuition etc. lie in this vast region. In short we have 'our Kingdom of God within' as Jesus Christ describes it, but we will miss it in our life, unless we travel, to that state.

Every kind of travel requires a vehicle. The journey into the inner-space also requires a vehicle—the vehicle is meditation.

Karma yoga, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga, raja yoga etc. are the four usual practices/vehicles that take us to the 'Kingdom of God'. The simplest vehicle is Japa yoga. This is illustrated in the next page. Bhagavad Gita deals with many other practices also.

Benefits

— Life becomes an expression of joy and peace.
— Removes tension and worries and bestows health (mental+ physical)
— Ability to face problems and solve them increases.
— So-far-hidden knowledge and wisdom are revealed.
— Awareness and sensitivity of senses (vision, hearing etc) improve.
— Human relation is improved by broader outlook on life.

Practice–10—*Meditation*

Take a comfortable sitting position, in a silent room well-ventilated or open place like terrace, free from noise. Keep your spine and head erect but without strain. Be aware of your body; feel how steady and relaxed it is. Do not be in a hurry. Try to imagine that you are free from worries, or atleast they can be held in abeyance for the duration of the practice.

Begin to repeat your Mantra and rotate your mala, starting from the sumeru bead. Move each bead in turn so that it is synchronized with the Mantra repetition. Be aware of the Mantra and rotation of the mala while simultaneously watching the thought that arise.

Don't reject any thought; let them arise but be aware. All you have to do is to watch the process of the mind while simulta-

neously keeping in practice of the japa, the Mantra and mala movement. The same applies to outside disturbances; be aware of them but maintain awareness of the Mantra and mala.

Continue this way, until you return to the sumeru bead. Don't cross the sumeru but reverse the direction by turning the mala through 180 degrees with your fingers. Continue the practice.

Many ideas of distraction will arise but simply remain a witness. After sometime the thought will slowly reduce. Your concentration will automatically increase. If you go deeper, visions may appear. Let them arise; but observe them. Continue in this manner for the time you have assigned to the practice. Make sure you keep count of the number of mala rotation. At the end, watch *chidakasa* (mental space) for a short time.

—SWAMI SATHYANANDA SARASWATHI,
Founder of Bihar School of Yoga and
International Yoga Movement.

CHAPTER 12

GURU'S GRACE – A GREAT WONDER AND BENEFACTOR

Who is Guru

—by SWAMI RAMDAS

The Guru, when he gives the Name, infuses into it his own spiritual power. He transmits his power through the Mantra to the disciple. The word 'Guru' means 'dispeller of darkness' or giver of light. Guru is the spiritual awakener. Guru is God embodied in human form to liberate souls from ignorance. Ignorance is disease. Knowledge is health. Guru is the divine doctor, who cures us by giving us knowledge of Self.

Before we can be fit to receive the grace of the Guru, we have to purify ourselves by loving service rendered to our parents. The first honour and adoration of our heart must go to the mother, then to the father, then to the Guru who liberates us from the bondage of ignorance.

A God-realized soul alone can awaken and kindle another soul. Going to temples alone will not do. Reading books alone will not do. The contact of great souls who have realized God is essential.

Saints transmit their powers to others by thought, sight and touch. When a saint thinks of a person, even though he be far away, he is helped spiritually. A saint looks at a person – the person is transformed. A new consciousness dawns in him. If a saint touches an aspirant, the latter will feel a tremendous change taking place in him.

What are the characteristics of a saint? *Sama Darshan* or equal vision is a dominant trait that marks a saint from others. It is the keynote of his life. He sees God in all and loves all alike. While ordinary people are obsessed by individualistic outlook, a sense of separation from others, saints and sages who have realized the Truth show a universal outlook in their thoughts, words and deeds. They are also always conscious of their immortal and all-blissful nature and so are free from fear of death. They know that life is eternal and that everyone is essentially divine.

There are no external signs to mark out a God-realized saint. He does not grow a horn. But he is always full of bliss. He is happy under all conditions. No miracles can be expected from him, as a matter of course. But they are sometimes done by him by God's will, without his intention to perform them.

Satsang or association with a saint is indeed valuable. But it must be of the right kind. Internal contact must be established. Otherwise there is danger of the aspirant's mind getting externalized and remaining attached to the physical person of the saint, missing the impersonal Truth which the saint embodies. Without reaching the depths of the inner Reality represented by the saint, one cannot reap the full benefits of *Satsang*. One must take care not to fall into the error of thinking that a saint's grace can be won by adoring merely his body and serving him without looking upon all beings as his expressions and serving them with an equal vision. There is nothing more dangerous to an aspirant than a narrow, personal attitude. His progress depends on the extent to which he is able to expand his heart and universalize his outlook.

One cannot rise beyond a certain stage of spiritual advancement if he is bound to any institution. In spiritual matters, the best rules are those which are not made by others but self-imposed by the Guru from within. A tree does not grow in the shade of another tree, but gets stunted. It can grow fully only in the open. So also you must have a free and open atmosphere for your spiritual growth. One may receive light and inspiration from saints and sages, but one must have an atmosphere of freedom in which to develop one's nature, independent of all external interference or guidance. By depending always on guidance from without, the disciple does not look within and rely on God who dwells in the heart.

So get inspiration from saints, but do not think of taking shelter permanently in any Ashram. Live alone in a free and open atmosphere. Then God within will lead you. The indwelling God is none other than your Guru who initiated you from outside as a human being. Guru is the immortal, all-pervading Spirit. Never look upon him as a mere person. If you develop this attitude from the beginning, you will realize that the Guru never dies. You will never feel his absence as he is eternally within you.

Guru's Grace

—By SWAMI RAMDAS

God has made the law of Karma, but he can also set it aside. If he cannot brush aside His law, the law will be greater than He. This cannot be. For, he is the infinite, omnipotent Lord. So he must have the power to suspend any law. Generally God does not interfere. He allows the Karma to be worked out. But He may, in special cases, go beyond His law and by his grace free the soul from the bondage of Karma.

Our mind turns towards God only by His grace. It is His grace that makes us yearn for Him. Grace is self-revealing. When Grace comes to us, our heart becomes perfectly pure and we overflow with love for all beings. We shall have no ill-feeling towards anybody. We shall experience a rare joy which we never had before.

Does faith come first or Grace first? It has been conclusively proved by saints who have had the highest spiritual experience that Grace comes first. Without Grace we cannot have faith in God. The true devotee says: "Oh God, I remember You because You remembered me first."

Our ego-sense makes us think we can attain Him by our *Sadhana* or struggle. But we soon realize our helplessness and know that our efforts are by themselves of no avail. Then we surrender to Him and depend on His mercy. Thus we need His grace at the beginning, in the middle and at the end. Grace is all in all.

We cannot get Grace by virtue of our so-called merit. The worst sinners have received Grace and become pure and glorious. Purity is not a precondition for Grace. It is the flow of Grace that makes the heart pure. When grace comes, it comes, not because we deserve it, nor as a reward for our *Sadhana,* but only out of God's boundless mercy and love. One who gets Grace never feels he is worthy of it.

The way of grace is mysterious. You struggle for it and you do not get it. Sometimes, without any struggle, you get it. Its working is governed by something beyond all laws. It is not bound by any rules, regulations or conditions. You are wonder-struck when Grace comes to apparently undeserving persons, while the so-called deserving ones are still waiting for it.

Looked at from another angle, it must be said Grace is pouring on all alike. Some receive it and some do not. Some people open the windows of their hearts to receive Grace and benefit by it while others keep them closed and so they do not get it. But even to keep the windows of the heart open, we require inner aspiration and longing which can come to us only through His grace.

Grace is ever pouring on us from God, as the sun is ever shedding light on all objects – opaque, translucent and transparent. But opaque objects do not reflect the light, translucent things reflect it but partially, while transparent things reflect it fully. The difference is not due to the absence or failure of sunlight, but due to the difference in the reflecting capacity of the objects. Similarly, we imbibe Grace and benefit by it according to our capacity to receive, according to our preparedness and purity.

If Grace is all in all, and comes of its own accord, governed by no laws and conditions, what is the place of *Sadhana* in spiritual life? Why should we perform *Sadhana* at all? The secret is that *Sadhana* is done to make us realize that by *Sadhana* alone we cannot attain Him. So long as our ego-sense persists we cannot see God. When we know we are utterly helpless in spite of all our efforts to attain Him, our ego-sense is crushed and we throw ourselves at His feet.

It is difficult to know why God reveals Himself to some and plays the game of hide-and-seek with others. It is His *Lila* (play). He cannot be accused of favouring some and forsaking others. Let us always remember that He ever dwells in us and that we ever dwell in Him. He who reveals Himself to us is He. He who plays hide-and-seek with us is also He. Everything is He. Guru is He, *Shishya* is He, Player is He, Witness is He. There is none but He. Realize this great truth and rest happy.

Getting wisdom from the Guru: Be like a traveller in train

H.H. Sushumendra Swamy, Mantralayam – Mattathipathy asked Maruthi Rao, a devotee from Madras, how he had reached the matt (Ashram).

"By train."

"Were you alone or were there many more people in the train?"

"There were many people."

"What were they doing?"

"Some were playing cards, some were gossiping and some were drinking alcohol....."

"Were you participating in any of those activities?"

"No, Swamiji, I was not participating."

"Don't you have some of those habits?"

"No, Swamiji, I don't."

"Then, what were you doing in the train?"

"I was doing Japa and thinking about Swami Raghavendra and His Vrindavanam in Matralayam. I have totally surrendered to Swamiji."

"How do you say that you have totally surrendered to Him?"

"Whatever He tells me, I do without questioning Him.... In the last 25 years, I have done all types of work in His temple, including cleaning the toilets, sweeping the floor – everything that He wanted me to do. I consider all work to be done as His work. He is my Master and I am His slave."

"If I ask you to go back to Madras immediately, would you go back?"

"Yes, Swamiji."

"Then you must understand one thing," he paused for a moment and continued: "..... Just as you came by train and you did not participate in gossip, in drinking alcohal etc, you should not pay attention to what people do or talk or gossip. Your attention should be always concentrated on Sri Raghavendraswami only. You must think that you are a traveller in this world. If you think and act accordingly, you will never be in sorrow. Even your wife and children and all your friends and relatives should be considered as 'fellow-travellers'. This is called 'Bhakthi-Jnana-Vairagya'. This way of living only will give you permanent happiness and freedom from samsara (the world process)."

Maruthi Rao returned from Mantralayam with peace and happiness in his heart. While going towards Mantralayam, he had lots of worries and tensions; but when he returned, he felt as if all his burdens had been removed. He became very light-hearted and cheerful.

Maruthi Rao surrendered to Swamiji's "total-care-plan". Consequently Swamiji's support followed him in all his activities. Always he felt that Swamiji is doing everything for him. Whatsoever was necessary Maruthi Rao received from hitherto "Unknown Hands".

Be secure under his protective grace

Vimala lost her parents and Swamiji was permanently established in her mind as her eternal-Father.

At one time, she had a fear that she would be laid up with a fatal disease. This happened in the middle of certain medicaltests which continued for two weeks in a cancer hospital. When the fear reached an uncontrollable degree, she ran out of the hospital with total surrender to Swamiji. She and her husband were both suffering a psychic fear hither to not experienced. After a few days of suffering, they proceeded to Mantralayam for solace.

On the very first night, Swamiji appeared to her husband in a dream and gave a handful of "*Mantrakshara*" – (a symbol of blessings in the form of sanctified rice, in this case). To their great surprise, Vimala found a *pujari* (priest) waiting for her, just outside the temple, with some "*Mantrakshara*". This was not a usual practice of the *pujari*. The prasada was immediately taken as the direct offering from Swamiji. With the prasada (sanctified rice) as medicine for both body and mind, Vimala became all right. During the ten days of her stay in Mantralayam, Swamiji again appeared twice more in dreams and expressed the following two messages:

1. God is with form as well as without form. See Him everywhere in all beings.
2. Whatever is experienced in life, take it as good. The second message was conveyed by Swamiji whilst simultaneously giving something in hand which had a sweet fragrance.

Next morning, during the worship the same fragrance came from Vrindavanam. This was a confirmation that whatever He gives in our hands is blessing and everything in life is to be taken as *prasada* or the blessings of God.

Thus Swamiji answered every question and kept the family happy and peaceful under "His protective Grace."

Grace continued to pour on him throughout his life

Our dear grand children,

Mahendra got the shock of his life when he came to know that he was not promoted to the ninth class. His class-teacher told him

that he had failed in all subjects and that the school had found him unfit for promotion.

The principal of the school called him and gave him the school leaving certificate. The principal also communicated that such a student as Mahendra is not worthy to continue the studies in that school.

In addition to the shock, he was also very hurt by the principal's words. How to inform his parents about the shame he had brought to the family! He thought of committing suicide but Swamiji came to his mind and said "No". He returned home grief-stricken.

His mother understood Mahendra's plight by the very look of him. His father, a very busy man, became angry and shouted at Mahendra. "You rascal; go and get admission in some other school; or go to hell. I have no time for you."

He enquired at various schools and, with much difficulty, he finally got admission in one of them. However, this incident brought a big change in Mahendra's life.

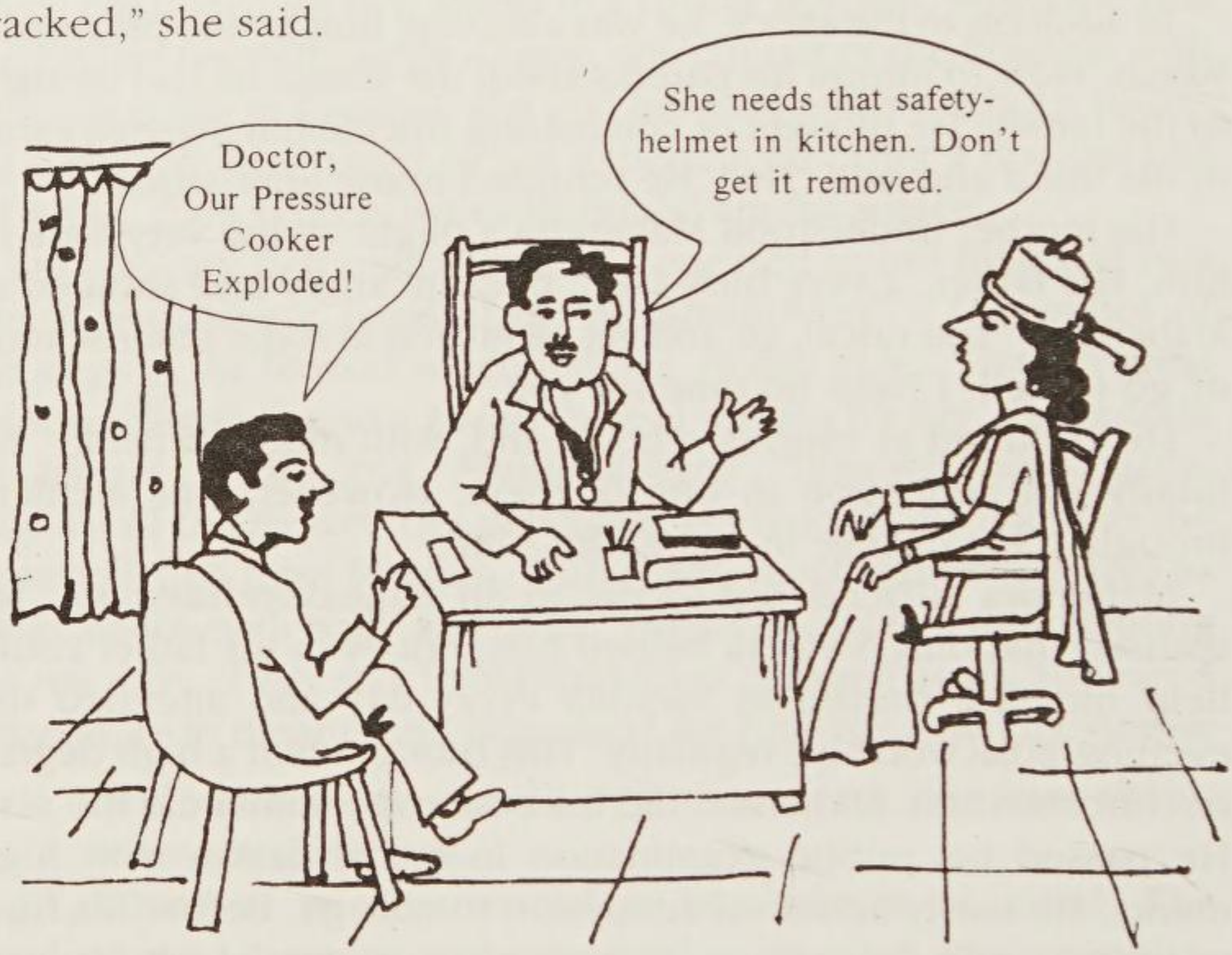
Mahendra surrendered totally to Sri Raghavendraswami. He realised that only Swamiji helped him; not even his father could help him. He prayed to Swamiji every day and attended the evening puja(worship) regularly. This brought him a high degree of concentration. Mahendra did his best and Swamiji did the rest. He passed his public examination in matriculation with high marks. He easily achieved admission to college. Before his final examination in the college, Swamiji also arranged a job for him. "Total surrender to God brings His total Grace," so says Mahendra with a smile tinged with tears of joy.

Safety at home and God's grace

Houses have been built with lots of architectural wonders and aesthetic charm, but when it comes to safety, very little has been done. Consequently, an accident could happen that opens our eyes, but it might be too late. Kitchen and bathrooms are the two places where serious accidents usually happen.

The kitchen, with its gas and electrical appliances is a highly accident prone area, as is the bathroom with smooth tiles and water-heaters. Pressure cooker explosion, gas leakage, and electrical shock are the three main issues where knowledge and guidance has to be passed on to the kitchen workers, the majority of whom are ladies.

Shanti has a good habit of getting up early in the morning and spending some time doing her yoga practices. This makes her more alert and cheerful. Inspite of her awareness, she met with an accident. The pressure cooker exploded, the lid flew up, hit the roof and fell back squarely on her head, fitting her head like a heavy helmet. "It is only by God's grace that my skull was not cracked," she said.



She needs that safety-helmet in kitchen

By the grace, be safe on roads

Gurumurthy and his wife are devotees of Raghavendraswami. Once, he and his wife together with their two sons were going by car to Mantralayam from Hyderbad. On the way, an accident happened and their car turned upside-down. All the members of Gurumurthy's family suffered only minor injuries though it could have been other-wise. A few villagers, who were going along the road, came to their rescue and helped to turn the car back on to its wheels. Luckily, the car also did not have any damage except some minor dents. While they were thinking about first-aid for dressing up the wounds, a doctor appeared on a cycle with a medical kit. He had been going to a nearby-village. He cleaned and dressed the wounds and gave suitable medicines. Mrs.

Gurumurthy required a special drug for herself and the doctor had even carried that rare-medicine, as if to cater for her need. All the family members wondered how it was that, the doctor had appeared exactly when they were in need of help. As it is beyond any logical explanation, and also beyond the predictions of probability theory, they could only assume that it was Swamiji's grace. He came in the form of the doctor or He sent the doctor to save His devotees. You may take it either way. How else can one explain this incident in a remote place?

Chanting *Mantra* with all our faith, prevents accidents. While driving the vehicle also, *Mantra japa* can go on, and the driving will be perfect and accident-free. This is our experience as well as many others.

The invisible hands of Sri Satya Saibaba is everywhere, showering grace

The statewide organization of the Sri Satya Saibaba Mission in Assam, planned to conduct their annual celebration day on a very big scale. They sent their representatives to inform Sri Satya Sai Baba and invite Him to grace the occasion with His presence. Sri Baba met them but expressed His inability to be physically present there in Gauhati. But, He assured them that He would be there spiritually.

Did the representatives understand the meaning of spiritual presence? They were a little disappointed, but were subsequently cheered up later, during the event of Baba's spiritual presence.

On the first day of the celebration, a big marathon procession of the devotees of Saibaba and delegates went through the main streets in Gauhati and finally reached the meeting place. One of Saibaba's large-sized photographs was placed on the stage. The first event was a prayer followed by the breaking of coconuts – a mark of the auspicious beginning. For this purpose, two coconuts were kept on a silver plate, in front of Baba's photograph.

In Assam, the custom is to break one coconut by another coconut. If both coconuts break correctly into four pieces of equal sizes, with regular edges, it is considered to be very auspicious.

The Chief Justice of the Assam High Court was invited as the Chief Guest to inaugurate the function. He was about to take the coconuts to break them when he heard the sound:

"TUCK!"

The two coconuts were broken exactly into four halves by the invisible hands. The 'news of the Grace' was announced through loudspeakers to the devotees and they jumped and danced with joy.

Whose hands were they, other than Sai Baba's?

Whose hands were they, other than Sai Baba's?

The grace of Mother Mary raised a poor shepherdess to be a saint

In the 'Mountain path', a magazine published by Sri Ramana Ashram, Dr. Susunaga Weeraperuma, writes about 'The mystery of Lourdes':

"To the casual tourist traveling across Europe, Lourdes is probably little more than a beautiful city in the French Pyrenees, verdant mountains and snowcapped peaks reminiscent of the Himalayas and inspiring a sense of awe. To Catholics throughout the world, however, Lourdes is not just a popular resort but a center of pilgrimage, one of the few places where the Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus, appeared in person. Here she was seen by a poor 14 year old shepherdess, Bernadette Soubirous (1844–1879), on eighteen different occasions, between February 11 and July 16, in 1858.

When Bernadette asked the Virgin Mary who she was, the Lady replied in the local patois, "Que soy era Immaculata Councepciou (I am the Immaculate Conception)". The girl kept repeating the words, eager, perhaps, to retain in her mind an overwhelming experience. What she saw was the living presence of a sacred being. Bernadette was truly blessed, for how many have met the Virgin Mary face to face?

The Heavenly Mother instructed Bernadette, "Penance, penance, penance!" Then the girl was asked to "come up on your knees and kiss the ground in penance for sinners." On another occasion, the Mother said, "Go to the priests and inform them that I want a chapel built. I desire a procession to come here." Via Bernadetta, the Virgin highlighted the need for penance and prayer. In the cave where the girl kissed the ground, a new fountain of water sprung up. This holy water is healing thousands of pilgrims.

In many parts of the world and particularly at Lourdes, the Virgin is held in great reverence. She is praised in her own right and not merely as the mother of an outstanding spiritual teacher. Here pilgrims give thanks to Mary or ask for her help. Three million pilgrims visit Lourdes every year, including 50,000 sick or disabled, many praying for their complete recovery from an illness.

"Many of these miraculous cures have been well documented. Documents in the archives of the medical office of Lourdes cover more than 6,000 cases of healing."

In Velankanny, south of Tamilnadu, similar mysteries have happened. Sailors were saved from the rough sea, blind and lame persons were cured, by Mother Mary, appearing to them. Thousands of pilgrims were healed and their problems were solved by the Universal Mother immaterial of their caste, creed or religion. Many of the cures have been documented there also. These mysterious cures and acts, happen even today.

Guru's Grace is the greatest wonder, the wonder of wonders.

Grace of mother divine

—By SWAMI RAMDAS

Divine grace comes to us through the Divine Mother. When the Mother is kind to us, she gives us the benefit of the *Darshan* of the Father. Ramdas will give you an instance from the Ramayana. We have read that when Rama, Sita and Lakshmana were going

along a narrow path in the forest, one after the other in a line, Lakshmana could not have the *Darshan* of Rama for a very long time, as Sita was in the middle. Lakshmana prayed to the Mother to stand aside a little, so that he could have *Darshan* of Rama. She then stepped aside and allowed Lakshmana to have *Darshan* of Rama. So, by the grace of the Divine Mother, the veil of *Maya* (delusion) that stands between us and the Supreme Lord can be removed. Therefore we must propitiate the Mother first before we can have the vision of God.

The Divine Mother is the mother of the entire universe. She is the very personification of Divine Shakti. To surrender ourselves to the Divine Mother is to recognize that by Her will and power all things happen in the world. It is by Her power that we walk, talk and do everything. Every movement that takes place in the universe, all actions and activities are born of Her power. When we realize this truth, our ego-sense automatically disappears, the I-ness vanishes and we realize the Shiva aspect of the Divine, who is the all-pervading static Brahman. Then we have a right to say '*Sivoham*', '*Chidanandarupa Sivoham Sivoham*' (I am Siva. Siva who is Consciousness - Bliss is myself). This divine revelation comes to us through the grace of the Mother. Therefore, what we have to do is to become Her children and behold the whole universe as Her manifestation. In fact, everything that has name and form is Her name and form.

You know from the life of Sri Ramakrishna that he was an ardent and a very faithful and devoted son of the Divine Mother. He was able to see the Divine Mother everywhere, in all beings, creatures and things in the latter part of his life. It is this grand vision of the Divine Mother everywhere that liberates us from the thraldom of the individual self and the cycle of birth and death. In this connection, Ramdas will give you an illustration of how we have to behold the whole universe as the manifestation of the Mother.

You have heard of Mira Bai, the famous saint of Mewar. One day she wished to have *Darshan* of a *Mahatma* and went to the place where he lived. When she neared the hut she was told by one of his disciples that the *Mahatma* was not prepared to see her as she was a woman and he was a *Purusha* (Man). Then Mira Bai sent word, "I have known of only one *Purusha*, and he is Krishna. All the rest in the world are women. Since I hear that there is another *Purusha* here, I would very much like to see him:" As

soon as the message was conveyed to the *Mahatma* he came out and fell at the feet of Mira Bai asking her pardon. So, in fact, although outwardly we appear like men and women, virtually we are the expressions and manifestations of the Mother.

Ramdas will give you another instance. Many years ago, when we went to Pandharpur, a place of pilgrimage in India, we had no idea where we could stay for the night. We reached the place late in the evening and when we entered the city we met a very old woman. She was holding a stick in her hand and was a bent figure. We went to her and asked where we could find a suitable place for rest that night. She replied, "Mother, I shall show you the way to a *Dharmashala*.....". We all followed her. As we were walking in the street, she went on talking about the glory of the Divine Mother. She was saying that the Mother has become the stars, the sun, moon, all men and women, and all things and objects everywhere in the world, and She is present everywhere and in everything. This was the universal vision of the Mother, which the old woman had. When we passed a temple in which there was the image of Rukmini, the old woman at once fell prostrate in the street before the image. Her vision was indeed wonderful. She was seeing the Mother everywhere and was talking, behaving and doing everything like a child. So we have to become the children of the Divine Mother and through Her grace have the vision, *Darshan* and realization of God.

The final word....The seventh 's'—Saranagati Surrender

1st set of values

satyam (truthfulness)
smile (cheerfulness all the time)
silence (external and internal)

2nd set of values

smaran (God remembrance-constantly)
sacrifice (give up comforts that act as hurdles)
satsang (association with good persons, especially with Guru)

3rd the final word

saranagati (surrender to God)

Our darling grand children,

On human values, the great masters have instructed us many things. 18 values are mentioned in Bhagavad Gita. How to remember them; practise all of them? It is very difficult. So Swami Chidanandaji, Head of Swami Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh, suggests an easy method: Consider "*satyam*" (TRUTH) as the key value and compare it with the queenbee of a beehive. When you possess the queenbee, "*SATYAM*", all other qualities will follow and you will be in possession of all virtues. So when we say "be straight-forward in thought, word and deed," it means "be a *Satyavan* or *Satyavathi*". We coined the phrase "be straight" to indicate correct physical posture and right mental attitude, based on "TRUTH". "Be straight" is therefore, our first word; or we may say, "Be a *satyavan/satyavati*".

Satyameva jayate means truth only can win. However deep we may bury it and try to hide by putting up a false label, it will surely come out and expose the dishonest men/women. So, may God give us the strength to be honest and be ever truthful. Then only we can smile open-minded and be peaceful. Otherwise, our conscience will keep on pricking us, throughout our life, making us sick and more sinful. We should avoid it.

The second word is Smile; Smile under all situations. "Quite easy to say, but difficult to practice," you may say. It is true. But you will find some persons are able to smile almost all the time. Blessed are those. Dada Vaswani has shared with us his secrets in chapter 9. The third 'S' is for silence. Thus, straightness/satyam, smile and silence are our first set of three "S"s. *Nama japa* practice, based on 'remembrance of God,' who is 'TRUTH, ANANDAM and SILENCE', is therefore advocated by the great Gurus. Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Ramdas and Meherbaba are the three masters/saints who are glaring examples of these three "S" s. Ofcourse, there are many more Gurus who could be taken as examples. You may look out; you will find.

The second set of three "S" s are Smaran, Sacrifice and Satsang. Remembrance of God is 'Smaran' and it is the common thread of all the anecdotes of this book—the link principle. All the spiritual values and practices are based on this principle. Sacrifice comes next. We cannot achieve anything of value without sacrifice. We mentioned about Sriram, He sacrificed pleasures like fried food (oily and fatty food), watching T.V., too much cricket etc., but

took to yoga practice, *bhajan, keerthan, sandhya-vandan, Gayatri Japa* etc., all of them contributed to develop high concentration power, the greatest asset. Some one may call these as orthodox methods but he did not mind criticism. He achieved state level first-rank. You must know what to sacrifice for achieving incredible results, and you must forgo them strictly. *Satsang* means association of good people, primarily Sadguru. Mother, Father and Guru are gods. Obedience to them and serving them are real worship of God. Swami Vivekananda, while a student, came in contact with his Guru Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, who made Vivekananda the architect of Free-India. Vivekananda inspired many great leaders including Gandhiji who is the Father of our Nation. *Satsang* is the way to Guru's grace or God's grace. May the three masters, mentioned above inspire us.

The seventh 'S' or the final word, is 'SURRENDER/ SARANAGATI'. Swami Ramdas says:

"All sadhanas are meant to show you, your own littleness, the futility of all personal effort and ineffectiveness of even prayer unless Divine grace comes to take you to the goal. It is only at the end of your sadhana that you are prepared to throw yourself entirely at the mercy of God, concede that your efforts are of no avail and to believe that your salvation rests with Him and Him alone. It is only then that you will be made to say, "O God, I now see that I am nothing and you are everything. You alone must save me." You have heard the prayer:

"anyatā śaraṇam nāsti,
tvameva śaraṇam mama
tāsmāt kāruṇya bhāvena,
rakṣa rakṣa janārdana "

(There is none else to protect me, O Lord ! You alone are my Saviour. Therefore, O Compassionate One, do save me, do save me!) This must be the spirit of your prayer. That is the highest pitch or point at which alone you can be said to have truly surrendered to God. When that highest point is reached and your surrender is total, wholehearted and unreserved, then in a trice you are saved.

The anecdotes presented in this book, have the spirit of surrender. When the expected result is received, we have a tendency to go back to our original state of ego, the exact opposite state of surrender. Those who continue their perseverance to achieve

self-realisation, the eternal joy, the goal of their life, work hard to achieve total surrender, wholehearted, and unreserved. To them life becomes radiant and immortal. They have nothing more to achieve in life. They are already fulfilled. All saints like Swami Ramadas, Sri Ramakrishna etc are shining examples of all the Seven 'S's.

Thus we conclude our book with the final surrender. May this humble offering be blessed by all our Masters, Saints and Sat Gurus. May this offering of 'LOVE' book be a source of inspiration to you and help you to develop the faith in God!

If these seven 'S's are difficult to practise, we suggest only two values :

(We repeat the wise words of Swami Ramdas)

Love all; it is love of God (bhakti)

Serve all; it is worship of God (puja)

Prayer

gurur brahmā gurur viṣṇuḥ
gurur devo mahesvaraḥ
guruh sākṣāt param brahma
tasmai śri gurave namaḥ

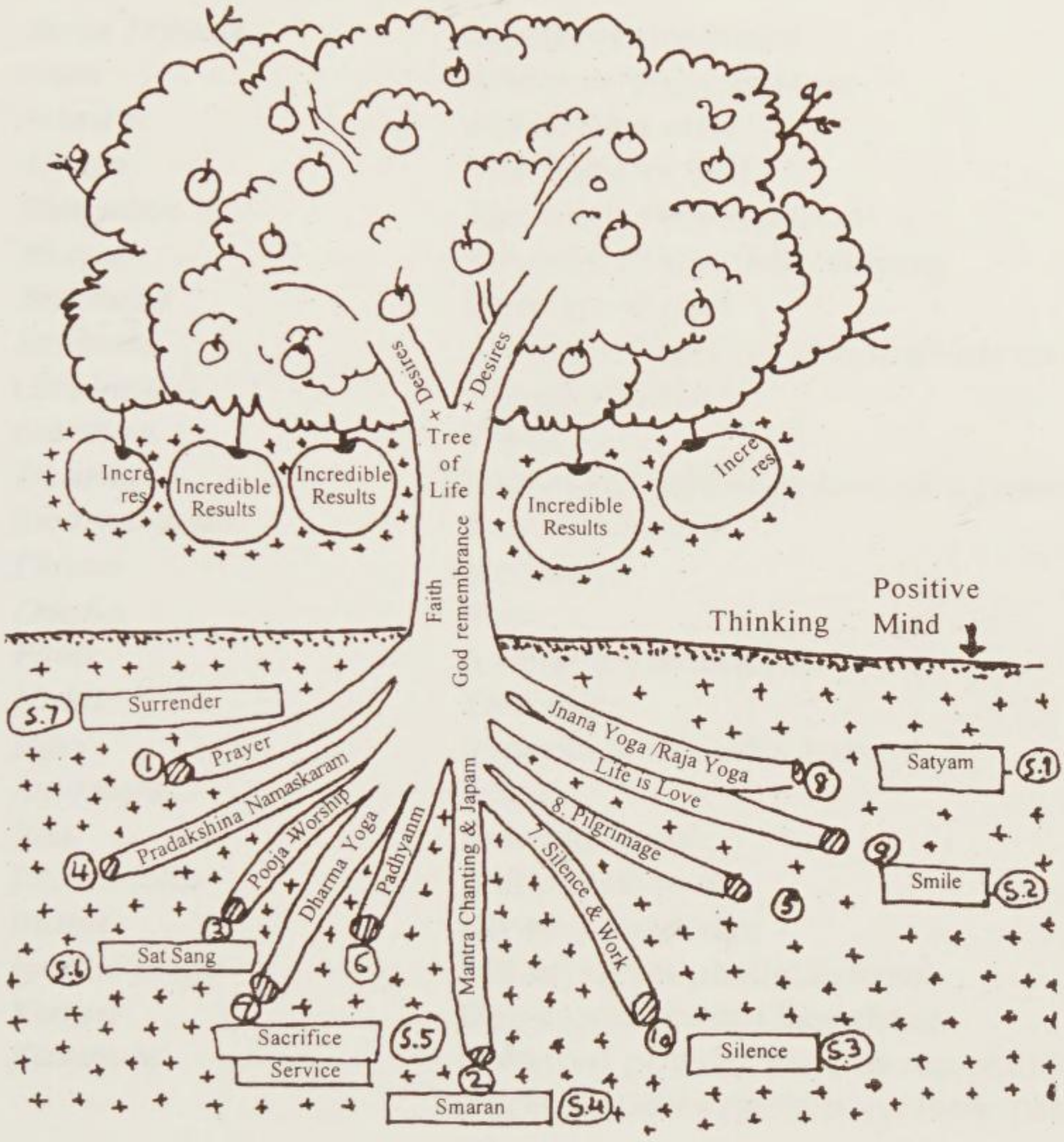
(Guru is the glory of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. Guru is the personified transcendental fullness of Brahman. To Him I bow down).

Lokāḥ Samastāḥ Sukhino Bhavantu
Om Śantiḥ ! Śantiḥ ! Śantiḥ !

Note: Start with ANY ONE PRACTICE of this book. The result will be surely achieved.

The seven values are nourishment for happy living, like water and manure for soil. Develop to the full, ANY ONE VALUE. All other values will follow, as the bees follow the queen bee.

THE KALPA VRIKSHA - (Wish fulfilling tree)



Sketch Illustrating The Seven Values and Ten Practices,
for Achieving Desired Results

GLOSSARY

Anna Prasad	Sanctified rice/lunch
Asan	A seat or yogic posture
Ashram	Abode of a saint
Atman	The Spirit or Self
Bhagavan	The Lord; Personal God
Bhajan	Worship of God with singing
Brahman	Impersonal God
Brahmin (*Brahman*)	A person born in the highest cast among Hindus
Darshan	Vision
Dharma	Prescribed righteous duty of a person
Dharmashala	Free rest-house
Dhyan	Meditation
Diksha	Vow
Fakir	A religious mendicant
Haldi	Termeric
Japa	Repetition of God's name
Japamala	Rosary
Jiva	Individual soul
Jivanmukta	A liberated soul
Jnana	Divine knowledge
Jyothir linga	Self-effulgent phallic Symbol
Kirtan	Devotional music (Keerthan)
Kumkum	Coloured powder used as decoration marks by ladies on their eyebrow centre
Laddu	Sweet meatball
Lila	Play
Linga	Phallic symbol
Mahatma	A great soul
Mutt/Math	Hindu monastery
Maya	Illusion
Mantra	The word/name of divine
Mantra-diksha	Initiation by Guru to a Mantra
Nagara Sankirtan	A procession of devotees singing hymns

Nama-Smaran	Remembrance of God's name
Namaskar	Salutation
Nishkama	Without expectations
Pradakshina/	Circumambulation–walking around the
(Pradaksina)	temple with God-remembrance, chanting the Holy Name.
Prajna	Consciousness
Pranayama	Breathing exercises to control the mind and strengthen the life-force in the body.
Pranam	Salutation
Prasad	Blessings or a symbol of blessing
Puja/Pujari	Worship/Worshipper
Ram-Mantra	Incantation of God's name, hare Rama.
Rudrakshamala	Rosary or garland of beads which are obtained as seeds from special trees found in the Himalayas
Sacchidananda	See Sat-chit-ananda
Sadguru	A Self realized Guru
Sadhana	Spiritual practice
Sadhak	One who regularly does Spiritual practices
Sadhu	Saint
Sakama	Tinged with worldly desires
Samadhi	A saint's tomb or trance condition
Sannyasi/Samnyasi	A religious mendicant
Sashtanga Namaskar	Salutation with prostration
Sat-chit-Ananda	Existence-knowledge-bliss
Satvik (Sattvik)	Innocent, harmonious
Satyam-Sivam-Sundaram	Truth-Auspiciousness-beauty
Shraddha	Faith
Sharanam/Sharan	Surrender
Sparshan	Feel of touch
Tapas	Austerity
Theertha	Holy Water
Tulasimala	Rosari or garland made of Tulsi beads
Vairagya	Dispassion
Vada	A south Indian food preparation
Yajna	Sacrifice for invoking God or collective prayer

Personal Growth/Inspiration

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SRIMATHI VATSALA and SRI GOKULAN are a peace loving, Guru inspired couple. Their other book is *Management by Commonsense*. They have conducted several training programmes for GEC; ITC, SPIC, Kaveri Engg. Secheron-Electrodes, FACT; Neiveli Lignite Corporation etc.

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